

BIRMINGHAM CITY COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE CITY COUNCIL

TUESDAY, 05 NOVEMBER 2024 AT 14:00 HOURS
IN COUNCIL CHAMBER, COUNCIL HOUSE, VICTORIA SQUARE,
BIRMINGHAM, B1 1BB

A G E N D A

1 NOTICE OF RECORDING

Lord Mayor to advise that this meeting will be webcast for live or subsequent broadcast via the Council's Public-I microsite [\(please click this link\)](#) and that members of the press/public may record and take photographs except where there are confidential or exempt items.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

Members are reminded they must declare all relevant pecuniary and other registerable interests arising from any business to be discussed at this meeting.

If a disclosable pecuniary interest is declared a Member must not participate in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain in the room unless they have been granted a dispensation.

If other registerable interests are declared a Member may speak on the matter only if members of the public are allowed to speak at the meeting but otherwise must not take part in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain in the room unless they have been granted a dispensation.

If it is a 'sensitive interest', Members do not have to disclose the nature of the interest, just that they have an interest.

Information on the Local Government Association's Model Councillor Code of Conduct is set out via <http://bit.ly/3WtGQnN>. This includes, at Appendix 1, an interests flowchart which provides a simple guide to declaring interests at meetings.

3 MINUTES

To confirm and authorise the signing of the Minutes of the meeting held on 17 September 2024.

4 LORD MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

(1400-1410)

To receive the Lord Mayor's announcements and such communications as the Lord Mayor may wish to place before the Council.

5 PETITIONS

(10 minutes allocated) (1410-1420)

To receive and deal with petitions in accordance with Council Rules of Procedure (B4.4 E of the Constitution)

As agreed by Council Business Management Committee a schedule of outstanding petitions is available electronically with the published papers for the meeting and can be viewed or downloaded.

6 QUESTION TIME

(70 minutes allocated) (1420-1530)

To deal with oral questions in accordance with Council Rules of Procedure (B4.4 F of the Constitution).

- A. Questions from Members of the Public to any Cabinet Member or Ward Forum Chair (20 minutes)
- B. Questions from any Councillor to a Committee Chair, Lead Member of a Joint Board or Ward Forum Chair (up to 10 minutes)
- C. Questions from Councillors other than Cabinet Members to a Cabinet Member (up to 20 minutes)
- D. Questions from Councillors other than Cabinet Member to the Leader or Deputy Leader (up to 20 minutes)

7 **APPOINTMENTS**

(10 minutes allocated) (1530-1540)

169 - 174

7a **UPDATE ON PROPORTIONALITY CALCULATIONS**

Councillor John Cotton to move the following recommendations:

"1. That the updated proportionality calculations, including changes to aggregate entitlement, set out in **Appendix 1**, be noted.

2. That the appointments made to committees on 21 May 2024, updated by Full Council on 18 June 2024, 9 July 2024 and 17 September 2024, set out in **Appendix 2**, be noted.

3. That, in view of the changes to aggregate entitlement, the following amendment to committee appointments be made: Labour to give up a seat to the Liberal Democrats on Licensing and Public Protection Committee."

7b **APPOINTMENTS BY THE COUNCIL**

To make appointments to, or removal from, committees, outside bodies or other offices which fall to be determined by the Council.

175 - 254

8 **WEST MIDLANDS COMBINED AUTHORITY SCRUTINY AND AUDIT ANNUAL REPORT 2023/24**

(40 minutes allocated) (1540-1620)

Councillor John Cotton to move the following recommendations:

"That City Council notes the report".

255 - 262

9 **LEAD MEMBER REPORT – WEST MIDLANDS POLICE AND CRIME PANEL**

(20 minutes allocated) (1620-1640)

Councillor Rashad Mahmood to move the following recommendation:

"That City Council notes the content of the report and the update provided on the activities of the West Midlands Police and Crime Panel between November 2023 and November 2024."

Break (1640-1710)

263 - 278

10 **SCRUTINY BUSINESS REPORT**

(30 minutes allocated) (1710-1740)

Councillor Sir Albert Bore to move the following recommendation:

"That City Council note the report".

279 - 282

11 **DECISIONS NOT ON THE FORWARD PLAN AND THOSE AUTHORISED FOR IMMEDIATE IMPLEMENTATION**

(5 minutes allocated) 1740-1745)

Councillor John Cotton to move the following recommendation:

"That City Council notes the report."

283 - 290

12 **MOTIONS FOR DEBATE FROM INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS**

(90 minutes allocated) (1745-1915)

To consider the attached Motions of which notice has been given
in accordance with Council Rules of Procedure (B4.4 G of the
Constitution).



**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF BIRMINGHAM CITY COUNCIL HELD
ON TUESDAY, 17 SEPTEMBER 2024 AT 1400 HOURS IN THE
COUNCIL CHAMBER, COUNCIL HOUSE, BIRMINGHAM**

PRESENT:- Lord Mayor (Councillor Ken Wood) in the Chair.

Councillors

Akhlaq Ahmed	Saima Ahmed	Deirdre Alden
Robert Alden	Gurdial Singh Atwal	Raqeeb Aziz
Shabina Bano	David Barker	David Barrie
Baber Baz	Matt Bennett	Marcus Bernasconi
Bushra Bi	Sir Albert Bore	Nicky Brennan
Kerry Brewer	Marje Bridle	Mick Brown
Zaker Choudhry	Liz Clements	Maureen Cornish
Carmel Corrigan	John Cotton	Phil Davis
Adrian Delaney	Diane Donaldson	Barbara Dring
Jayne Francis	Sam Forsyth	Ray Goodwin
Rob Grant	Colin Green	Fred Grindrod
Roger Harmer	Deborah Harries	Kath Hartley
Adam Higgs	Des Hughes	Jon Hunt
Mumtaz Hussain	Shabrana Hussain	Timothy Huxtable
Mohammed Idrees	Zafar Iqbal	Katherine Iroh
Ziaul Islam	Morriam Jan	Kerry Jenkins
Meirion Jenkins	Jane Jones	Amar Khan
Ayoub Khan	Saqib Khan	Izzy Knowles
Chaman Lal	Bruce Lines	Mary Locke
Ewan Mackey	Basharat Mahmood	Majid Mahmood
Rashad Mahmood	Lee Marsham	Karen McCarthy
Saddak Miah	Shehla Moledina	Gareth Moore
Simon Morrall	Yvonne Mosquito	Richard Parkin
Miranda Perks	Rob Pocock	Julien Pritchard
Hendriona Quinnen	Esther Rai	Darius Sandhu
Jamie Scott	Shafique Shah	Rinkal Shergill
Sybil Spence	Ron Storer	Jamie Tennant
Paul Tilsley	Lisa Trickett	Penny Wagg
Clifton Welch	Alex Yip	Waseem Zaffar

NOTICE OF RECORDING

- 35 The Lord Mayor advised that the meeting would be webcast for live and subsequent broadcasting via the Council's Public-I website and that members of the press/public may record and take photographs except where there were confidential or exempt items.

DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

- 36 The Lord Mayor reminded Members that they must declare all relevant pecuniary and non-pecuniary interests relating to any items of business to be discussed at the meeting.

There were no declarations of interest made by Members.

MINUTES

- 37 It was moved by the Lord Mayor, seconded and –

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 9 July 2024 be taken as read and confirmed and signed.

LORD MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

- 38 The Lord Mayor welcomed Joanne Roney CBE to the Council, who had recently been appointed as Managing Director.
-

PETITIONS

Petitions Relating to City Council Functions Presented at the Meeting

- 39 The following petitions were presented:-

(See document No. 1, 'Additional Meeting Documents')

In accordance with the proposals by the Members presenting the petitions, it was moved by the Lord Mayor, seconded and:-

RESOLVED:-

That the petitions were received and referred to the relevant Chief Officer(s).

Petitions Update

- 40 A Petitions Update had been made available electronically:-

(See document No. 2, 'Additional Meeting Documents')

It was moved by the Lord Mayor, seconded and

RESOLVED:-

That the Petitions Update be noted and those petitions for which a satisfactory response has been received, be discharged.

QUESTION TIME

- 41 The Council proceeded to consider Oral Questions in accordance with Council Rules of Procedure (B4.4 F of the Constitution).

Details of the questions asked are available for public inspection via the webcast.

APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT CHAIR OF AUDIT COMMITTEE

- 42 A report of the Assistant Director (Governance) was submitted:-

(See document No. 3, agenda item 7a)

Councillor John Cotton moved the recommendation as outlined within the report which was seconded by Councillor Paul Tilsley.

It was therefore-

RESOLVED:-

1. That City Council approved the appointment of Andrew Hardingham as Independent Chair of the Audit Committee for the municipal year 2024/25.
-

APPOINTMENTS BY THE COUNCIL

- 43 The Lord Mayor invited Groups to address the Council to advise of any changes to appointments.

Councillors John Cotton and Katherine Iroh addressed the Council to request changes to appointments.

RESOLVED:-

1. That City Council noted the appointment of Steve Bell as the Roman Catholic diocese representative on the Education, Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
 2. That City Council noted that Councillor Jack Deakin be appointed to the Health and Adult Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
-

EXECUTIVE BUSINESS REPORT

- 44 A report of Councillor Majid Mahmood, Cabinet Member for Environment

and Transport was submitted:-

(See document No. 4, agenda item 8)

Councillor Majid Mahmood moved the recommendation which was seconded by Councillor Rob Pocock.

A debate ensued.

Councillors Roger Harmer, Julien Pritchard, Deirdre Alden, Miranda Perks, Jon Hunt, Timothy Huxtable, Marje Bridle, Rob Grant and David Barker spoke during the debate.

The Lord Mayor invited Councillor Majid Mahmood to sum up.

RESOLVED:-

1. That City Council noted the report.
-

PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE COUNCIL'S PROCUREMENT AND CONTRACT GOVERNANCE RULES

- 45 A report of Councillor Karen McCarthy, Cabinet Member for Finance was submitted:-

(See document No. 5, agenda item 9)

Councillor Karen McCarthy addressed to Council to request that the report be deferred to a future meeting.

A briefing had been provided to Members in advance of the meeting which explained that the deferral was being sought due to the relevant government legislation having been delayed and not yet implemented. It was therefore appropriate to consider the report at a future meeting when this legislation had been implemented.

The request to defer the report was seconded from the floor.

RESOLVED:-

1. That City Council agreed to defer this item to a future meeting.
-

ADJOURNMENT

- 46 It was moved by the Lord Mayor, seconded and-

RESOLVED:-

That the Council be adjourned until 1650 hours on this day.

The Council then adjourned at 1620 hours.

- 47 At 1650 hours the Council resumed at the point where the meeting had been adjourned.
-

MEMBER/OFFICER PROTOCOL

- 48 A report of Councillor Rob Pocock, Cabinet Member for Transformation, Governance and HR was submitted:-

(See document No. 6, agenda item 10)

The Lord Mayor invited Mr Peter Wiseman, Chair of the Standards Committee to address the Council.

Councillor Rob Pocock moved the recommendation which was seconded from the floor

A debate ensued.

Councillors Fred Grindrod, Julien Pritchard, Miranda Perks and Liz Clements spoke during the debate.

The Lord Mayor invited Councillor Rob Pocock to sum up.

Following a show of hands, the recommendation was carried.

RESOLVED:-

1. That City Council approved the revised Member/Officer Protocol set out in appendix 1 of the report.
-

POLICY ON THE APPOINTMENT AND REMOVAL OF THE TITLE OF HONORARY ALDERMAN

- 49 A report of the Assistant Director (Governance) was submitted:-

(See document No. 7, agenda item 11)

Councillor John Cotton moved the recommendations which were seconded from the floor

A debate ensued.

Councillor Matt Bennett spoke during the debate.

The Lord Mayor invited Councillor John Cotton to sum up.

Following a show of hands, the recommendations were carried.

RESOLVED:-

1. That the Council adopted the policy as set out in appendix 1 of the report.

2. That City Council agreed that any current petitions relating to the removal of any honourable titles be considered under the policy.
-

MOTIONS FOR DEBATE FROM INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS

The Council proceeded to consider the Motions of which notice had been given in accordance with Council Rules of Procedure (B4.4 G of the Constitution).

A. Councillors Roger Harmer and Izzy Knowles had given notice of the following Notice of Motion:-

(See document No. 8, agenda item 12)

Councillor Roger Harmer moved the Motion which was seconded by Councillor Izzy Knowles.

In accordance with Council Rules of Procedure, Councillors Majid Mahmood and Lee Marsham gave notice of the following amendment to the Motion:-

(See document No. 9, 'Amendments – City Council')

Councillor Majid Mahmood moved the amendment which was seconded by Councillor Lee Marsham.

In accordance with Council Rules of Procedure, Councillors Jon Hunt and Morriam Jan gave notice of the following amendment to the Motion:-

(See document No. 10, 'Amendments – City Council')

Councillor Jon Hunt moved the amendment which was seconded by Councillor Morriam Jan.

In accordance with Council Rules of Procedure, Councillors Timothy Huxtable and Alex Yip gave notice of the following amendment to the Motion:-

(See document No. 11, 'Amendments – City Council')

Councillor Timothy Huxtable moved the amendment which was seconded by Councillor Alex Yip.

In accordance with Council Rules of Procedure, Councillors Julien Pritchard and Rob Grant gave notice of the following amendment to the Motion:-

(See document No. 12, 'Amendments – City Council')

Councillor Julien Pritchard moved the amendment which was seconded by Councillor Alex Rob Grant.

A debate ensued.

Councillors Richard Parker, David Barker and Gareth Moore spoke during the debate.

The Lord Mayor invited Councillor Roger Harmer to sum up.

The amendment to the Motion in the names of Councillors Majid Mahmood and Lee Marsham having been moved and seconded was put to the vote and by a show of hands was declared to be carried.

The amendment to the Motion in the names of Councillors Jon Hunt and Morriam Jan having been moved and seconded was put to the vote and by a show of hands was declared to be lost.

The amendment to the Motion in the names of Councillors Timothy Huxtable and Alex Yip having been moved and seconded was put to the vote and by a show of hands was declared to be lost.

The amendment to the Motion in the names of Councillors Julien Pritchard and Rob Grant having been moved and seconded was put to the vote and by a show of hands was declared to be lost.

The Motion as amended, having been moved and seconded was put to the vote and by a show of hands was declared to be carried.

RESOLVED:-

“In recognition of the road safety emergency in Birmingham, this council resolves to:

Implement the following measures by the end of this council's term (specifically by the end of April 2026)

- Reduce speeding
- Treble the number of average speed cameras – based on the number we have today and placed on roads with high frequency of traffic collisions and/ or issues with speeding.
- Reduce dangerous driving
- Implement the pilot for traffic violation cameras as passed by Cabinet in December 2022.
- Engage communities
- Consult communities to identify local hot spots that should be prioritised for action via ward forums, consultation via Birmingham Be heard and other channels.
- Improve school safety
- Review the measures taken thus far to improve school safety and develop a plan to roll out best practice across the city.
- Be transparent

- Report publicly on the number of speeding fines, poor parking fines, dangerous driving arrests and convictions.
- Prevent dangerous parking
- Ensure road markings are clear. Work with the police to enforce penalties for poor parking.
- Continue to lobby the government to change the sentencing guidelines to increase the maximum prison sentences for those who cause death or serious injury by dangerous driving, and to increase the maximum driving bans to allow judges to hand out lifetime bans for convicted drivers.
- Create a new process to capture and validate speed reporting from citizens including data collection and requesting police enforcement.
- Work with West Midlands Police to provide training for elected members to carry out speed watch programmes in their own wards.
- Recruit a Road Harm Reduction Officer to oversee the numerous road harm reduction activities occurring within BCC.
- Consider best practice across the country and set up a Road Safety Collision Panel.”

B. Councillors Paul Nicky Brennan and Raqeeb Aziz had given notice of the following Notice of Motion:-

(See document No. 13, agenda item 12)

Councillor Nicky Brennan moved the Motion which was seconded by Councillor Raqeeb Aziz.

In accordance with Council Rules of Procedure, Councillors Shabina Bano and Morriam Jan gave notice of the following amendment to the Motion:-

(See document No. 13, ‘Amendments – City Council’).

Councillor Shabina Bano moved the amendment which was seconded by Councillor Morriam Jan.

In accordance with Council Rules of Procedure, Councillors Matt Bennett and Robert Alden gave notice of the following amendment to the Motion:-

(See document No. 14, ‘Amendments – City Council’).

Councillor Matt Bennett moved the amendment which was seconded by Councillor Robert Alden.

The Lord Mayor invited Councillor Nicky Brennan to sum up.

The amendment to the Motion in the names of Councillors Shabina Bano and Morriam Jan having been moved and seconded was put to the vote and by a show of hands was declared to be lost.

The amendment to the Motion in the names of Councillors Matt Bennett and Robert Alden having been moved and seconded was put to the vote and by a show of hands was declared to be lost.

The Motion, having been moved and seconded was put to the vote and by a show of hands was declared to be carried.

RESOLVED:-

“This council notes that:

The recent scenes of organised racist violence that unfolded across the country have caused understandable concern within communities across Birmingham.

The work of council officers, the police, and partners across the city helped to soothe tensions in the days following the violence, with the Community Safety and Cohesion teams coordinating the local response and conducting reassurance visits to local mosques, and meeting with community and faith representatives alongside the police.

Muslim communities, and mosques, were targeted across the country by far-right rioters. This required the Home Office to provide an emergency Protective Security Support scheme, under which twenty local mosques in Birmingham have received additional protective security.

7 in 10 councillors reported experiencing abuse or intimidation in the last year according to the LGA's 2022 councillor census.

Members have expressed concerns about their own safety across the city.

In signing up to the Diverse Councils Declaration, it committed to taking a zero-tolerance approach to bullying and harassment of members including through social networks.

This council believes that:

All violent forms of protest, whatever their claimed cause or motive, should be condemned. There is no place for violence, abuse or intimidation in a democratic society.

Every person, whether a citizen of the United Kingdom or an individual seeking asylum, whatever their faith or belief, and whatever their identity, must feel safe in our city.

The government's swift response to the violent riots is to be praised, and the robust sentences being handed down to those who were directly involved in, or encouraged, the violence sends a clear message that this will not be tolerated.

The bravery of police officers, and other emergency service workers, in responding to the scenes of violence should be commended.

This council resolves to:

Continue its work to build bridges between our diverse communities and to tackle those who seek to divide people through the peddling of hatred and division.

Step up our work with the Government and other agencies to tackle hatred and improve support for communities who have been subjected to harassment, intimidation and violence.

Work with the Government on the delivery of measures to protect Mosques and Synagogues across the city to ensure that all our residents are free to worship without fear.

Provide evidence on electoral intimidation to the government's Defending Democracy taskforce.

Invite the Home Secretary to the city to witness the work that is carried out to build community cohesion and develop stronger ties."

The meeting ended at 1908 hours.



CITY COUNCIL 17 SEPTEMBER 2024

WRITTEN QUESTIONS TO CABINET MEMBERS

CITY COUNCIL – 17 SEPTEMBER 2024

WRITTEN QUESTIONS

A To the Leader of the Council

1. Savings

From Councillor Robert Alden

2. Social Media Advertising

From Councillor Adrian Delaney

3. Perry Barr regeneration area

From Councillor Jon Hunt

4. Tower Hill Library

From Councillor Morriam Jan

5. Budget Savings

From Councillor Ewan Mackey

6. Professional register of interests

From Councillor Deirdre Alden

B To the Deputy Leader of the Council

1. Invictus Games

From Councillor Bruce Lines

2. Community Infrastructure Levy and s106

From Councillor Robert Alden

3. Perry Barr Masterplan

From Councillor Jon Hunt

4. MOVED TO F21

5. MOVED TO F22

6. MOVED TO F23

7. Highbury Hall liabilities

From Councillor Meirion Jenkins

8. **Highbury Hall grant**
From Councillor Bruce Lines
9. **Highbury Hall revenue costs**
From Councillor Ewan Mackey
10. **Applications 1**
From Councillor David Pears
11. **Applications 2**
From Councillor Matt Bennett
12. **Applications 3**
From Councillor Deirdre Alden
13. **Applications 4**
From Councillor Robert Alden
14. **Applications 5**
From Councillor Ewan Mackey

C To the Cabinet Member for Children Young People and Families

1. **Children Missing Education**
From Councillor Debbie Clancy
2. **SEND Children in private school**
From Councillor Deirdre Alden
3. **School Transport Appeals**
From Councillor Darius Sandhu
4. **SEND Children in private school VAT costs**
From Councillor Robert Alden
5. **MOVED TO D5**

D To the Cabinet Member for Digital, Culture, Heritage and Tourism

1. **Library consultation**
From Councillor Clifton Welch
2. **Library consultation weighting**
From Councillor Robert Alden
3. **Tower Hill Library**
From Councillor Jon Hunt
4. **Centenary Square fountain**
From Councillor Zaker Choudry
5. **Small Heath Leisure Centre**
From Councillor Babar Baz

E To the Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport

1. **Potholes**
From Councillor Adam Higgs
2. **Manhole covers**
From Councillor Adrian Delaney
3. **Vehicle Hire**
From Councillor Alex Yip
4. **Tame Valley Viaduct contract management**
From Councillor Bruce Lines
5. **Road repair response times**
From Councillor Clifton Welch
6. **Fleet and Waste vehicle hire**
From Councillor Darius Sandhu
7. **Grass Cutting**
From Councillor Ewan Mackey

8. **Waste vehicle hire**
From Councillor David Pears
9. **Grass cutting staff**
From Councillor Debbie Clancy
10. **Road Closures**
From Councillor Deirdre Alden
11. **Tame Valley Viaduct project reviews**
From Councillor Gareth Moore
12. **Ground Maintenance KPIs**
From Councillor Kerry Brewer
13. **Green Flag Parks**
From Councillor Maureen Cornish
14. **Kier Payments**
From Councillor Meirion Jenkins
15. **Tame Valley Viaduct funding**
From Councillor Timothy Huxtable
16. **Replacement and new bins**
From Councillor Robert Alden
17. **Recycling**
From Councillor David Barrie
18. **Fortnightly Collections**
From Councillor Ron Storer
19. **Brum Breathes funding**
From Councillor Jon Hunt
20. **Fly tipping locations in Yardley**
From Councillor Roger Harmer
21. **Gully cleaning and maintenance**
From Councillor Babar Baz

22. **Average Speed Cameras on A45 Coventry Road**

From Councillor Paul Tilsley

23. **MOVED TO H8**

24. **MOVED TO F24**

25. **Additional Recycling container**

From Councillor Matt Bennett

F To the Cabinet Member for Finance

1. **Planning budget**

From Councillor Deirdre Alden

2. **Duplicate Payments**

From Councillor Robert Alden

3. **Council Tax Discounts**

From Councillor David Barrie

4. **Asset Disposal Programme**

From Councillor Matt Bennett

5. **Asset Disposal Programme revenue impact**

From Councillor Kerry Brewer

6. **Insurance**

From Councillor Debbie Clancy

7. **Wifi Upgrade**

From Councillor Maureen Cornish

8. **Plan B Management Solutions consultancy work**

From Councillor Adrian Delaney

9. **Highbury Hall Income**

From Councillor Adam Higgs

10. **Contract Register**

From Councillor Timothy Huxtable

11. **MOVED TO B7**
12. **MOVED TO B8**
13. **MOVED TO B9**
14. **MOVED TO J7**
15. **MOVED TO J8**
16. **Apprenticeship Levy**
From Councillor David Pears
17. **Pressures**
From Councillor Darius Sandhu
18. **Public Health Grant**
From Councillor Ron Storer
19. **Public Health Grant and general fund**
From Councillor Alex Yip
20. **Traded Services**
From Councillor Clifton Welch
21. **Acivico**
From Councillor Richard Parkin
22. **Acivico 2**
From Councillor Ewan Mackey
23. **Acivico 3**
From Councillor Adam Higgs
24. **Pinnacle**
From Councillor Clifton Welch

G To the Cabinet Member for Health and Social Care

NONE SUBMITTED

H To the Cabinet Member for Housing and Homelessness

1. Empty Properties

From Councillor Gareth Moore

2. Empty Properties 2

From Councillor Robert Alden

3. Temporary Accommodation

From Councillor Ron Storer

4. Void properties

From Councillor Alex Yip

5. Prisoner release

From Councillor Debbie Clancy

6. Gas and Electric Safety Certificates

From Councillor Bruce Lines

7. Perry Barr Village Estate Agency costs

From Councillor Darius Sandhu

8. Perry Barr Village contracts

From Councillor Deirdre Alden

9. MOVED TO E24

10. Prisoner Release scheme

From Councillor Ewan Mackey

11. Housing maintenance changes

From Councillor Adam Higgs

12. Housing charges

From Councillor David Pears

I To the Cabinet Member for Social Justice, Community Safety and Equalities

1. ASB Ombudsman Findings

From Councillor Robert Alden

2. **ASB Council motion**

From Councillor Ewan Mackey

3. **Prisoner Release**

From Councillor Debbie Clancy

J To the Cabinet Member for Transformation, Governance and Human Resources

1. **DBS Checking**

From Councillor Alex Yip

2. **Gifts and Hospitality**

From Councillor Debbie Clancy

3. **Delegated Decisions**

From Councillor Darius Sandhu

4. **Job Evaluation**

From Councillor Ron Storer

5. **Job Evaluation milestones**

From Councillor David Pears

6. **Childcare vouchers**

From Councillor Clifton Welch

7. **Job Evaluation budget**

From Councillor Gareth Moore

8. **Transport Levy**

From Councillor Richard Parkin

K Chair of the Planning Committee

1. **MOVED TO B10**

2. **MOVED TO B11**

3. **MOVED TO B12**

4. **MOVED TO B13**

5. **MOVED TO B14**

CITY COUNCIL – 17 SEPTEMBER 2024

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO LEADER OF THE CITY COUNCIL FROM
COUNCILLOR ROBERT ALDEN**

“Savings”

Question:

At July Council, the Labour Group amended a motion on the urgency of identifying and delivering savings. In the amended motion, you said that directorates would put forward savings by the end of July.

September’s update to Cabinet showed that less than half of the new savings needed have been identified (£56m out of £119m needed) and commissioners have said they are not confident that the Council can deliver sufficient savings to bridge the budget gap. Meanwhile, failings in delivering the current year’s savings are adding a £20.383m pressure.

Given your confidence in July that the Executive would do what was necessary over the summer to close the budget gap, why have you come up so short?

Answer:

The task of finding sufficient savings to close the budget gap is an ongoing task and activity for the council as it seeks to produce the MTFP and we are mindful that all savings that are put forward need to be robust and deliverable and be taken through a process of review. The budget gap at July Cabinet was between £74.7m and £79.2m, at September Cabinet this had reduced to £62.3m.

Since the July Cabinet meeting Officers and Members have been working on multiple tasks to reduce the budget gap;

- Further work to identify savings has continued since the July Cabinet meeting, Star Chambers have been held through July, August and have continued into September, areas for potential savings that have been identified are being worked up and were not able to be included in the September S151 Update Cabinet report, an update will be shared at October’s Cabinet meeting. This work has been jointly undertaken by Councillors and Officers and has been led by the Cabinet Member for Finance.
- Delivery Plans for savings proposals have been submitted for 2025/26 and are currently being reviewed by Officers, this will be concluded by the end of September

and an updated savings figure for the MTFP will be shared in the October S151 Update Cabinet report.

- As detailed in the September S151 Update Cabinet report (Section 6), further areas of potential savings have been identified and are being worked through by Officers, it is expected that these will be brought forward during September and reviewed.
- Throughout September, pressures that have been put forward by Directorates are being reviewed by CLT and by Corporate & Finance OSC Budget Task & Finish Group. It is expected that mitigations will be identified to reduce down these pressures.

CITY COUNCIL – 17 SEPTEMBER 2024

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE LEADER OF THE CITY COUNCIL FROM
COUNCILLOR ADRIAN DELANEY**

“Social Media Advertising”

Question:

What was the total spend on social media advertising in each year since 2012, broken down by funding source (general fund, public health grant, external grant etc.)

Answer:

The spend figures relating to Corporate Communications (general fund) advertising spend on social media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and LinkedIn) are listed below.

Spend has historically been used to boost the reach of posts for various campaigns, for example: Budget consultation; green waste sales; Future City Plan; Zero Hero (reduce, reuse, recycle campaign) amongst others.

There was an increase in spend around Covid, where initiatives like business grants and protect your family and friends messaging were promoted and also around the Commonwealth Games period where, for example, the Queens Baton Relay and “I’m ‘Proud because..” campaigns were highlighted.

Extra Government funding for Covid and the Games would have been used to support these campaigns.

Since the S151 was announced there has been no spend on advertising.

Nothing before 2015/16

2015/16 - £300

2016/17 – £1,528

2017/18 – £2,701

2018/19 - £2,199

2019/20 – £1,005

2020/21 - £7,701

2021/22 - £1,004

2022/23 - £11,925

2023/24 – £1,096

2024/25 - £0

In addition, Public Health colleagues have recorded the following spend:

23/24 to support three areas of work:

- Physical activity: £6,800
- Cardiovascular health: £7,200
- Mental health: £3,700

24/25: £0 to date

CITY COUNCIL – 17 SEPTEMBER 2024

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL FROM
COUNCILLOR JON HUNT**

Perry Barr regeneration area

Question:

In the light of the Council's failure to achieve its target for housing sales in the Perry Barr regeneration area, will the leader establish a strategic oversight board for the Perry Barr Masterplan, with local member involvement, and – as in East Birmingham, where Liam Byrne MP is Chair – chaired by an elected member, particularly in the light of the development place-based strategy?

Answer:

As members will be aware, the bulk sale of plots on Perry Barr Residential Scheme has moved forward significantly. Cabinet approval was given on 23 July 2024 for one plot to be retained by the Council for social rent, with Cabinet Sub-Committee (Property) approving the bulk sale, as affordable housing, of three other plots to a third party on 08 August 2024. Within PBRs, a further 4 plots (2,3,4 and 5) have been marketed for sale, with high levels of interest shown.

The masterplan sets out a long-term vision for Perry Barr, part of which focuses on creating opportunities for the development of more housing. With many sites already assembled in advance, and in tandem with the development of PBRs Phase One, the priority will be to seek ways to turn-around these sites as part of the next two phases of PBRs.

I think it is right to set up a Strategic Oversight Board with local member and relevant council officers also involved. The Board will provide strategic oversight and improved member engagement, which I hope will be welcomed by Councillor Hunt.

CITY COUNCIL – 17 SEPTEMBER 2024

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL FROM
COUNCILLOR MORRIAM JAN**

Tower Hill Library

Question:

In the light of the Jack Reacher writer Lee Child's powerful advocacy for Tower Hill library will he endure the libraries department and the housing dept have meaningful discussions about how this facility (which he may have used in his youth) can stay open with community support?

Answer:

We understand the library consultation is a sensitive matter for many library users and that they may have concerns about the future of our libraries. We also understand the importance of them all for education and learning for young authors and library users.

Throughout the consultation period we have had and continue to have meaningful discussions with all stakeholders including the housing department about the proposed library provision and what this could look like for each library.

Unfortunately, we cannot comment further on specific issues during the consultation period. Further information about the final phase of the library consultation can be found on the council's website where you will find the BeHeard survey. The library consultation closes on Friday 27 September, and we would like to urge as many people as possible to respond to the consultation and have their say.

CITY COUNCIL – 17 SEPTEMBER 2024

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL FROM
COUNCILLOR EWAN MACKEY**

“Budget Savings”

Question:

Please provide a breakdown of the value of savings that are forecast to be delivered in 2024/25 for the savings identified as being brought forward in Appendix 2 of your September Cabinet report.

Answer:

Appendix 2 of the ‘Section 151 Officer Update for September 2024, including Quarter 1 2024/25 Monitoring’ Cabinet paper outlines a list of potential savings that have been proposed for 2025/26, the full year effect of these savings total £11.982m. At Cabinet on 10th September 2024, it was agreed to accelerate work in relation to these savings. This will include producing Equality Impact Assessments and Health Impact Assessments, to identify whether any of these savings can be brought forward into 2024/25. Until the Directorates have completed this work it will not be possible to know the actual value of savings that could be brought forward into 2024/25.

CITY COUNCIL – 17 SEPTEMBER 2024

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL FROM
COUNCILLOR DEIRDRE ALDEN**

“Professional register of interests”

Question:

On 13 June 2017 Full Council agreed a motion to progress a professional register of interests for council officers. Despite being chased a number of times since, the will of full council has still not been implemented. Why has this not happened, and when will you commit to it being done by?

Answer:

There is now an up-to-date Register of Chief Officer Interests which all senior offices must complete. This was established over the summer.

It is imperative that our senior officers, and indeed all officers, uphold the highest standards of integrity and transparency in all their dealings, both internally and externally. Updating the Register is not merely a procedural requirement but a fundamental aspect of our commitment to the Nolan Principles of Public Life.

The Register is maintained by the Monitoring officer and there will be regular reports to the Standards Committee to ensure compliance.

B1

CITY COUNCIL – 17 SEPTEMBER 2024

WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE DEPUTY LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR
BRUCE LINES

“Invictus Games”

Question:

The 21+ budget set out an estimate of the revenue cost of the commonwealth games that would fall on the council for additional operational activity such as street cleaning, traffic management etc. The cost of this was estimated to be in the region of £15m and was to be substantially funded through "business as usual budgets." What estimate has been made of these additional costs for the Invictus Games, and how will this be funded?

Answer:

The Birmingham 2027 Invictus Games will take place at the National Exhibition Centre (NEC) Birmingham. We do not anticipate that there will be any BCC costs linked to additional operational activity such as street cleaning, traffic management etc as the site falls outside the city boundary.

I am very supportive and excited about the opportunity the Invictus Game will bring to the city, such as tourism, job creation and bringing communities together. The games will be great for our schools and young people, and we will be seeking to be a convenor and collaborating across BCC service areas, city and regional partners to maximise the benefits for Birmingham.

CITY COUNCIL – 17 SEPTEMBER 2024**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE DEPUTY LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR
ROBERT ALDEN****“Community Infrastructure Levy and s106”****Question:****Please provide a breakdown of all CIL and s106 funding currently held by the council, including a list of committed projects and the cost of these****Answer:**

S106	
£46,548,013.32	Total S106 sums
£35,627,075.20	Committed S106 sums
£10,594,835.76	Uncommitted S106 sums
£326,102.36	S106 sums to be refunded

Notes:**Committed S106 sums could mean:**

- Projects which have fully spent but funds haven't been drawn down from S106 account
- Projects which are part spent/on site and haven't been drawn down from S106 account
- Agreements which have very narrow wording which doesn't allow for interpretation (e.g. provision of affordable housing, payment to named groups/organisations) and therefore should be considered committed.
- Projects where the implementing service are already in discussions regarding possible projects/locations for works

Sums to be refunded:

- These could be part refund/residual balances after works are complete/balances which have been refunded but are still showing in Oracle.

Strategic CIL	
£12,993,970.00	Strategic CIL balance
£16,327,110.00	Strategic CIL commitments
£5,237,967.70	Unallocated strategic CIL balance

Local CIL	
£3,717,160.00	Unallocated local CIL balance

We are beginning a review of the CIL allocation process with an aim to move to a targeted, proactive approach, addressing different needs in different parts of the city. As CIL is a funding resource relatively free of funding restrictions (compared to many other funding streams), there is an opportunity to maximise the geographic and thematic reach of CIL using a place-based approach to increase economic growth within the city using other available funding sources as match. This place-based approach would be underpinned by the growth zones within the emerging Local Plan, ensuring CIL is spent in line with the Regulations.

Members will be consulted during the development of this approach.

CITY COUNCIL – 17 SEPTEMBER 2024

WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE DEPUTY LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR JON HUNT

Perry Barr Masterplan

Question:

Will the Deputy Leader meet Ward Councillors to review progress and appropriateness of the Perry Barr masterplan, particularly in the light of the development of economic place-based strategy?

Answer:

I am always willing to meet with ward members and have recently following a request from Cllr Paul Tilsley met with him, alongside key lead officers to discuss Perry Barr.

If local ward members in Perry Barr would like to meet, I am more than happy to arrange a meeting and will invite key lead officers.

B4

CITY COUNCIL – 17 SEPTEMBER 2024

**PLEASE NOTE WRITTEN QUESTION B4 - HAS NOW BEEN REDIRECTED TO
F21 – CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE**

B5

CITY COUNCIL – 17 SEPTEMBER 2024

**PLEASE NOTE WRITTEN QUESTION B5 - HAS NOW BEEN REDIRECTED TO
F22 – CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE**

B6

CITY COUNCIL – 17 SEPTEMBER 2024

**PLEASE NOTE WRITTEN QUESTION B6 - HAS NOW BEEN REDIRECTED TO
F23 – CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE**

B7

CITY COUNCIL – 17 SEPTEMBER 2024

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE FROM
COUNCILLOR MEIRION JENKINS**

“Highbury Hall liabilities”

Question:

The cabinet report approving £3.5m match funding for the restoration of Highbury Hall cited as a key benefit the reduction in the financial risks relating to the maintenance and repairs of the property held in Trust. With the council now reneging on its commitments to match funding, what assessment has been made of the financial risk to the council from maintenance and repairs liabilities, and what provision has been made for this within financial plans?

Answer:

Highbury Hall is held by Highbury Trust rather than Birmingham City Council, so any liability rests with the Trust. The Trust currently has funds available and is seeking to rationalise the estate into its core holdings and use receipts generated to maintain the estate.

CITY COUNCIL – 17 SEPTEMBER 2024

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE FROM
COUNCILLOR BRUCE LINES**

“Highbury Hall grant”

Question:

The £5 NLHF award for Highbury Hall was conditional on match funding from the council of £3.5m, now the council has withdrawn the match funding, what claw back is there on any money already received from NLHF and impact on further sums due to be received?

Answer:

Following a Stage 1 NLHF bid the Chamberlain Highbury Trust (CHT) were awarded, in September 2021 £368K by the NLHF towards costs of £619K to develop the proposal to restore Highbury as a community Heritage asset. The Round 1 funding grant was awarded directly to CHT. Therefore, all conditions including any claw back will be the responsibility of CHT.

The Council provided £150k match funding towards the total development costs of £619k to deliver the proposal to RIBA Stage 3. These monies have been drawn down.

The round 2 application for the delivery of the project was a joint submission from CHT and the Council. Although the application was successful the award has not been formally accepted so no conditions apply.

CITY COUNCIL – 17 SEPTEMBER 2024

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE DEPUTY LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR EWAN
MACKEY**

“Highbury Hall revenue costs”

Question:

Future plans for Highbury Hall were predicated on reducing the ongoing revenue cost to the council to zero. With that work no longer progressing, what revenue costs have been included in the council’s mtfp for any costs associated with Highbury hall

Answer:

The City Council's Civic Catering service is exiting operations at Highbury Hall at the end of September 2024. Responsibility for the building will revert back to Highbury Trust. The Trust currently has funds available and is seeking to rationalise the estate into its core holdings and use receipts generated to maintain the estate.

CITY COUNCIL – 17 SEPTEMBER 2024

WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE DEPUTY LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR DAVID PEARS

“Applications 1”

Question:

In each year since April 2020 how many planning applications were received and how many were determined in each year (split between major and minor)

Answer:

Year	Majors Received	Majors Determined	Minors Received	Minors Determined	Minor "Other" Received	Minors "Other" Determined
2020	186	164	328	272	964	833
2021	208	181	314	285	965	832
2022	160	133	265	198	876	823
2023	128	125	248	240	804	768

*Excludes Telecomms Licence Advisory, Enforcement, Pre-application Advice and Non-material amendment

"Minor Others" have traditionally been reported separately, they cover conditions Material Amendments and lawful development certificates.

CITY COUNCIL – 17 SEPTEMBER 2024

WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE DEPUTY LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR MATT BENNETT

“Applications 2”

Question:

In each month since April 2022, please detail the number of planning applications received each month and the number registered each month, split between minor and major.

Answer:

Month	Majors Received	Majors Determined	Minors Received	Minors Determined	Minor "Other" Received	Minors "Other" Determined
Apr-22	12	16	20	16	74	74
May-22	14	11	14	15	74	80
Jun-22	9	10	14	14	72	63
Jul-22	6	15	25	14	65	61
Aug-22	13	9	22	15	68	73
Mar-00	13	10	17	19	70	54
Oct-22	16	11	33	17	72	71
Nov-22	17	7	27	7	63	56
Dec-22	14	12	29	21	78	81
Jan-23	3	17	23	19	60	69
Feb-23	14	17	6	31	72	68
Mar-23	10	16	18	21	63	71
Apr-23	5	11	24	10	59	62
May-23	11	6	25	20	80	62
Jun-23	9	8	26	22	70	67
Jul-23	17	10	21	16	72	61
Aug-23	10	5	22	21	50	67
Sep-23	7	13	18	13	75	49
Oct-23	11	11	20	21	76	65
Nov-23	15	4	26	28	79	71
Dec-23	16	7	19	18	48	56

Jan-24	2	14	14	31	57	61
Feb-24	6	6	26	22	74	70
Mar-24	5	10	19	16	73	55
Apr-24	9	4	20	13	88	63
May-24	13	10	13	18	63	68
Jun-24	10	10	11	15	49	55
Jul-24	10	8	25	10	48	49

"Minor Others" have traditionally been reported separately, they cover conditions Material Amendments and lawful development certificates.

CITY COUNCIL – 17 SEPTEMBER 2024

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE DEPUTY LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR
DEIRDRE ALDEN**

“Applications 3”

Question:

In each month since April 2022, what was the average time between an application being submitted, and an application being determined as valid, split between minor and major

Answer:

Unfortunately, the planning department doesn't retain historic records of the time applications take from being received to being made valid. Once applications are received, we process that application to ensure all required information accompanies that application. We have a working target that seeks to complete that process within five days. Unfortunately, a number of applications are submitted without all the required documents or elements that are necessary to assess that planning application. Applications can be 'held' while we go back to applicants to seek correct plans, the fee, or the required documents to assess the application before they are made valid.

Currently we have a backlog of applications within the planning registration process which we have been working to reduce through streamlining our processes and putting additional resource into the team to work through the backlog.

CITY COUNCIL – 17 SEPTEMBER 2024

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE DEPUTY LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR
ROBERT ALDEN**

“Applications 4”

Question:

In each month since April 2022, what total number and percentage of applications were determined within statutory timescales?

Answer:

Year	Month	In date	Out of date	Total Apps	Decimal In Date	Percentage in Date
2022	4	516	62	578	0.89	89.27
2022	5	575	77	652	0.88	88.19
2022	6	550	61	611	0.90	90.02
2022	7	511	43	554	0.92	92.24
2022	8	519	40	559	0.93	92.84
2022	9	473	69	542	0.87	87.27
2022	10	469	43	512	0.92	91.60
2022	11	503	70	573	0.88	87.78
2022	12	621	54	675	0.92	92.00
2023	1	510	37	547	0.93	93.24
2023	2	444	35	479	0.93	92.69
2023	3	580	56	636	0.91	91.19
2023	4	468	48	516	0.91	90.70
2023	5	544	57	601	0.91	90.52
2023	6	521	66	587	0.89	88.76
2023	7	573	54	627	0.91	91.39
2023	8	464	47	511	0.91	90.80
2023	9	428	57	485	0.88	88.25
2023	10	544	50	594	0.92	91.58
2023	11	481	57	538	0.89	89.41
2023	12	399	51	450	0.89	88.67
2024	1	467	44	511	0.91	91.39
2024	2	426	58	484	0.88	88.02
2024	3	432	51	483	0.89	89.44

2024	4	390	60	450	0.87	86.67
2024	5	308	92	400	0.77	77.00
2024	6	299	32	331	0.90	90.33
2024	7	148	22	170	0.87	87.06

CITY COUNCIL – 17 SEPTEMBER 2024

WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE DEPUTY LEADER FROM COUNCILLOR EWAN MACKEY

“Applications 5”

Question:

In each month since April 2022, what total number and percentage of applications required an agreement of extension of time in order to be determined within statutory timescales?

Answer:

Year	Month	Total Applications	Total number of applications with extension of time	% of all applications decided with an extension of time within the agreed timetable (meeting statutory timetable)	% of all cases with an extension that were decided within the agreed timetable (meeting the statutory timetable)	Number of applications where there was an extension of time but the timetable was missed (failing statutory timetable)	Number of applications where there was an extension of time and timetable met (meeting statutory timetable)
2022	4	578	190	25%	75%	47	143
2022	5	652	213	20%	61%	83	130
2022	6	611	226	26%	71%	66	160
2022	7	554	208	28%	74%	55	153
2022	8	559	225	30%	75%	56	169
2022	9	542	188	22%	64%	67	121
2022	10	512	178	27%	76%	42	136
2022	11	573	184	21%	67%	61	123
2022	12	675	166	18%	74%	43	123
2023	1	547	131	19%	78%	29	102
2023	2	479	125	19%	71%	36	89
2023	3	636	171	21%	78%	38	133
2023	4	516	127	18%	73%	34	93
2023	5	601	142	16%	68%	45	97
2023	6	587	170	19%	66%	58	112
2023	7	627	183	21%	72%	51	132

2023	8	511	131	18%	72%	37	94
2023	9	485	131	19%	70%	39	92
2023	10	594	136	15%	66%	46	90
2023	11	538	170	22%	69%	52	118
				% of all applications decided with an extension of time within the agreed timetable (meeting statutory timetable)	% of all cases with an extension that were decided within the agreed timetable (meeting the statutory timetable)	Number of applications where there was an extension of time but the timetable was missed (failing statutory timetable)	Number of applications where there was an extension of time and timetable met (meeting statutory timetable)
Year	Month	Total Applications	Total number of applications with extension of time				
2023	12	450	125	20%	73%	34	91
2024	1	511	110	17%	79%	23	87
2024	2	484	129	20%	74%	34	95
2024	3	483	122	18%	73%	33	89
2024	4	450	124	20%	74%	32	92
2024	5	400	124	22%	72%	35	89
2024	6	331	59	15%	81%	11	48
2024	7	170	13	6%	77%	3	10

CITY COUNCIL – 17 SEPTEMBER 2024

WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND FAMILIES FROM COUNCILLOR DEBBIE CLANCY**“Children Missing Education”****Question:**

For each month since September 2022, how many new Children Missing Education Referrals were received and what was the size of the backlog of referrals waiting to be allocated\processed at that point?

Answer:

The Children Missing Education service fulfils the statutory duty under 436A of the Education Act 1996 *to make arrangements to identify all school aged pupils* resident within Birmingham Authority boundary. The Service complies with the DfE Guidance for Children Missing Education dated August 2024, in that schools, academies and partners can refer in pupils who are deemed as not in receipt of a suitable education to be investigated, whereabouts confirmed, and pupils reconnected back into education.

For the purposes of this question, the CME service only collates data on school aged pupils whose whereabouts are unknown and as a result have become disconnected from education (not in receipt of a suitable education). Pupils subject to a CME investigation may be registered in name only at a school, but with no registered attendance, or are Electively Home Educated pupils whose education is deemed unsuitable by the Local Authority. There are wider safeguarding concerns as a result in relation to this cohort of pupils.

Children Missing Education Data

Table 1- shows the number of CME Referrals received, and the backlog between September 2022- December 2022

2022	Total Received	Backlog
September	375	2
October	170	4
November	208	12

December	109	1
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Table 2- shows the number of CME Referrals received, and the back log between January 2023 and August 2023

2023	Total Received	Backlog
January	207	13
February	126	33
March	206	45
April	87	8
May	142	36
June	193	45
July	163	50
August	37	8
September	296	45
October	183	16
November	145	27
December	122	30

Table 3-shows the number of CME Referrals received, and the back log between January 2024-August 2024

2024	Total Received	Backlog
January	229	68
February	153	67
March	126	71
April	147	80

May	168	120
June	203	161
July	213	139
August	86	74

Historically, the typical referral flow for the service registers its ultimate peak across September/October (beginning of the academic year), when schools are busy processing pupil movements across all year groups especially for those pupils in the transition years (reception, Yr 2/3 and Yr 7) Referral flow will dip towards the end of each academic term, and peak again at the beginning of each term. The data clearly indicates this trend. The backlogs accrue as the academic year progresses and this can be explained by the increase in case complexity and the retrospective nature of how cases are progressed.

The redesign of the Thriving Children and Families division has taken account of the capacity within teams to meet statutory duties. The Business Case for the Thriving Children and Families redesign aims to increase capacity and capability and introduces a structure that is fit to deliver our statutory obligations. The service is now in the staff consultation phase and we expect this to continue until the end of October. The service has recruited additional agency staff to manage the backlog whilst we recruit to the permanent structure. In partnership with Health, the service has introduced integrated triage to ensure that the most vulnerable children are prioritised and work with our Early Help Team in Birmingham Children's Trust to wrap support around children and families.

CITY COUNCIL – 17 SEPTEMBER 2024

WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND FAMILIES FROM COUNCILLOR DEIRDRE ALDEN

“SEND Children in private school”

Question:

How many SEN children, and at what total cost, does the council place in private schools a) inside and b) outside the city?

Answer:

The number of SEND children with EHCPs placed in private (independent) schools as at the end of the academic year 2023/2024 is **539**.

Of these:

- 400 are placed inside the city (schools in Birmingham) at a full year annual equivalent cost of £15,597,504.
- 139 are placed outside the city (schools in other local authority areas) at a full year annual equivalent cost of £11,851,643.

CITY COUNCIL – 17 SEPTEMBER 2024

WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND FAMILIES FROM COUNCILLOR DARIUS SANDHU

“School Transport Appeals”

Question:

Since April 2024, please provide a breakdown of school transport appeals, split between pre and post-16 travel. This should include the number of appeals at each stage, the outcome of appeals, the average time to hear appeals, and the percentage heard and the appellants notified within timescales (i.e. 20 days for stage one and 40 days for stage two)

Answer:

Stage 1

The Stage 1 table below, shows the number of stage 1 appeals, divided into categories and number that did not meet Service Level Agreement as requested

April 2024 – September 2024	Number of appeals	Transport	Spare Seat	PTB	Bus Pass	ITT	Upheld	Withdrawn
Pre-Statutory	14	1	1		1		10	1
Statutory	141	20	1	13	13	6	86	2
Post 16	133	6		60	8	14	45	
Post 19	6			2		1	3	

Stage 2

The Stage 2 table below, shows the number of stage 2 appeals, divided into categories and number that did not meet Service Level Agreement as requested

April 2024 – September 2024	Number of appeals	Transport	Spare Seat	PTB	Bus Pass	ITT	Upheld	Withdrawn
Pre-Statutory	2	2						

Statutory	40	18		1	2		19	
Post 16	2				1		1	
Post 19	1						1	

	April Rec	Not met SLA	May	Not met SLA	June	Not met SLA	July	Not met SLA	August	Not met SLA	Sep	Not met SLA
Stage 1	18	0	40	5	25	7	32	30	150	146	29	18

Stage 2 100% met Service Level Agreement

The average time to hear appeals

APRIL	MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUGUST
Avg 11 days to hear appeals	Avg 17 days to hear appeals	Avg 19 days to hear appeals	Avg 28 days to hear appeals	Avg 32 days to hear appeals

The percentage of Post 16 appeals heard between April to September

April 2024 – September 2024	% of appeals heard
Pre-Statutory	61%
Statutory	76%
Post 16	65%
Post 19	67%

The appellants notified within timescales

The service is in the process of developing a system to capture this data in accordance with the newly implemented policy.

Appeals

Appeals should be made within 20 days to the council. The appeals process has two stages:

Stage 1 – A Council officer will consider the appeal within 5 working days of the receipt of the appeal form and the applicant will receive confirmation that the appeal is under review.

SLA:

Stage 1 - A decision and notification will be made within 20 working days from receipt of the appeals form.

Stage 2 – Stage 2 is a review by a panel of 3 Council officers independent of the original decision-making process which will take place within 40 working days. Council officer involved in the case will provide the applicant with written notification of its decision within 5 working days.

CITY COUNCIL – 17 SEPTEMBER 2024

WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND FAMILIES FROM COUNCILLOR ROBERT ALDEN

“SEND Children in private school VAT costs”

Question:

For SEN children placed within private schools, has any presumption been made for VAT within future budgets, and if so what assessment has been made of the cost of this?

Answer:

No presumption has been made for VAT within the High Needs Block as there will be a nil impact on this budget. This is because VAT is not included as part of any service budgets and all invoices/costs that are coded to these budgets exclude VAT.

C5

CITY COUNCIL – 17 SEPTEMBER 2024

**PLEASE NOTE WRITTEN QUESTION C5 - HAS NOW BEEN
REDIRECTED TO D5 – CABINET MEMBER FOR DIGITAL,
CULTURE, HERITAGE AND TOURISM**

D1

CITY COUNCIL – 17 SEPTEMBER 2024

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR DIGITAL, CULTURE,
HERITAGE AND TOURISM FROM COUNCILLOR CLIFTON WELCH**

“Library consultation”

Question:

At what time and date were the Labour Group briefed on the proposals for the second phase of the library consultation and what time were they provided with a copy of the presentation?

Answer:

The Labour Group were briefed at 9 am on Thursday 22nd August, the presentation was shared with Labour Group after the meeting took place at 10.28 am on the same day.

CITY COUNCIL – 17 SEPTEMBER 2024

WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR DIGITAL, CULTURE, HERITAGE AND TOURISM FROM COUNCILLOR ROBERT ALDEN

“Library consultation weighting”

Question:

Please provide a copy of the full scoring and weighting used to rank each of the 35 community libraries in the recent consultation?

Answer:

Option 4, the recommended option, does not use the priority list data, this option suggests all Libraries remain open apart from SpringHill which has been closed since Dec 2022 due to building conditions.

The proposed provision for option 3 was selected using a priority list Framework. Equal weighting of 50 percent has been applied to both **Community Need** and **Usage & Access**.

The methodology below details how the priority list was created.

Ward Level Community Need-Includes multiple dimensions of deprivation. The Index of Multiple Deprivation (known as IMD) is a standard and universally used central Government measure of relative deprivation for communities in England published in 2019. The City Observatory are using the data sources that they have, to create a more up to date version. The IMD combines data about income, employment, education, health, crime, living environment and barriers to housing and services.

All areas in England are ranked from most deprived to least deprived and are then split into 10 equal groups called deciles. Decile 1 contains the most deprived areas and Decile 10 the least deprived. An IMD score is identified for each library community, showing which library catchment areas are more deprived than others. This information is essential to help assess the need and potential demand for local library services and the ability to access these.

The weighting of the Community Needs data fields are in line with the English Indices of Deprivation 2019. In the current English Indices of Deprivation 2019 (IoD2019) seven domains of deprivation are considered and **weighted** as follows, Income. (22.5%) Employment. (22.5%) Education. (13.5%) Health. (13.5%) Crime. (9.3%) Barriers to Housing and Services. (9.3%) Living Environment. (9.3%)

A full list of all the data points used are listed below:

Income Deprivation Domain

- Library Name
- Adults and children in Income Support families

- Adults and children in income-based Employment and Support Allowance families
- Adults and children in Working Tax Credit and Child Tax Credit families not already counted, and whose equivalised income (excluding housing benefit) is below 60 per cent of the median before housing costs
- Asylum seekers in England in receipt of subsistence support, accommodation support, or both
- Adults and children in Universal Credit families where no adult is classed within the 'Working - no requirements' conditionality regime
- Income Deprivation Domain numerator
- Individual Indicators comprising the Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index
- Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index Numerator
- Individual Indicators comprising the Income Deprivation Affecting Older People Index
- Income Deprivation Affecting Older People Index Numerator
- **Employment Deprivation Domain**
- Claimants of Jobseeker's Allowance (both contribution-based and income-based), women aged 18-59 and men aged 18-64
- Claimants of Employment and Support Allowance (both contribution-based and income-based), women aged 18-59 and men aged 18-64
- Claimants of Incapacity Benefit, women aged 18-59 and men aged 18-64
- Claimants of Severe Disablement Allowance, women aged 18-59 and men aged 18-64
- Claimants of Carer's Allowance, women aged 18-59 and men aged 18-64
- Claimants of Universal Credit in the 'Searching for work' and 'No work requirements' conditionality groups.
- Employment Deprivation Domain numerator
- **Education, Skills and Training Deprivation Domain**
- Key Stage 2 attainment
- Key Stage 4 attainment
- Secondary school absence
- Staying on in education post 16
- Entry to higher education
- Adult Skills
- English language proficiency
- Adult skills and English language proficiency indicators - combined
- **Health Deprivation and Disability Domain**
- Years of potential life lost
- Comparative illness and disability ratio
- Acute morbidity
- Mood and anxiety disorders
- **Crime Domain**
- Violence
- Burglary
- Theft
- Criminal damage
- **Barriers to Housing and Services Domain**
- Road distance to a post office
- Road distance to a primary school
- Road distance to general store or supermarket

- Road distance to a GP surgery
- Household overcrowding
- Homelessness
- Housing affordability

Usage and Access-Understanding how those who 'live, work or study' in Birmingham currently access and use the Community Libraries. The Community Library usage and access data source is taken wherever available from the Sydpus Integrated Library Management system. Where data was not currently available, the source of data was provided by the Community Library service. The reporting period of January 2023 – December 2023 was used to ensure consistency across the Usage and Access dataset. Each of the Usage & Access data fields are equally weighted. A full list of all the data points used are listed below:

- Library Name
- Items issued
- Tier
- Open hours per week
- Computer (PC) bookings
- Number of event sessions: Councillor's Advice Sessions
- Number of attendees: Councillor's Advice Sessions
- Number of event sessions: Room Hired Events
- Number of attendees: Room Hired Events
- Number of event sessions: Activities for Adults
- Number of attendees: Activities for Adults
- Number of event sessions: Adult activities out of the building
- Number of attendees: Adult activities out of the building
- Number of event sessions: National Initiatives
- Number of attendees: National Initiatives
- Number of event sessions: Under 5's events/activities
- Number of attendees: Under 5's events/activities
- Number of event sessions: Over 5's events/ activities
- Number of attendees: Over 5's events/ activities
- Number of event sessions: Teenage activities
- Number of attendees: Teenage activities
- Number of event sessions: School visits (internal/External to the library)
- Number of attendees: School visits (internal/External to the library)
- Number of event sessions: Nursey & Playgroups visits (internal/External to the library)
- Number of attendees: Nursey & Playgroups visits (internal/External to the library)
- Number of event sessions: UK online
- Number of attendees: UK online
- Number of event sessions: ESOL activities
- Number of attendees: ESOL activities
- Number of event sessions: Author visits
- Number of attendees: Author visits
- Number of participants 'completed' in the Summer Reading Challenge or similar initiatives (in England).

- Number of participants 'registered 'in the Birmingham Winter Reading Challenge.
- Number of participants who 'completed' the Birmingham Winter Reading Challenge.
- Number of reading groups supported per library service. (Total number of event sessions: Includes Adults & Children's)
- Number of reading groups supported per library service. (Total number of attendees at event sessions: Includes Adults & Children)
- Number of events focused on digital support (Total number of event sessions: Coding & IT Clubs (Includes Adults & Children's)
- Number of events focused on digital support (Total number of attendees at event sessions: Coding & IT Clubs (Includes Adults & Children)
- Number of borrows who took out book loans by Library (Registered Home Location)
- Current number of members
- New memberships
- Members Re-registered
- Members Deleted
- Number of desk spaces made available within libraries on average each day

Using the **Ward level Community Need** and **Usage and Access** scores the libraries were prioritised (ranked) in order 1-35, with 1 being the highest priority for inclusion in the model. The table below gives a summary of the analysis and overall score:

Fig 1. Community Libraries Priority List -Summary Analysis*

*A full breakdown of all scores is attached in the excel spreadsheet below:

CITY COUNCIL – 17 SEPTEMBER 2024

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR DIGITAL, CULTURE,
HERITAGE AND TOURISM FROM COUNCILLOR JON HUNT**

Tower Hill Library

Question:

The Guardian has run a report about the Jack Reacher author Lee Child's support for Tower Hill Library and fond memories of how it inspired him as a writer. The on-line piece states that the City Council was approached for comment, but nothing is quoted. What would the cabinet member have said in response?

Answer:

I understand the library consultation is a sensitive matter for many library users and that they may have concerns about the future of our libraries. I also understand the importance of them all for education and learning for young authors and library users.

It is not appropriate to reply to comments during an ongoing statutory public consultation. However, further information about the final phase of the library consultation can be found on the council's website where the BeHeard survey can be found, for people to have their say about the proposals. Additionally, there are also in-person drop-in sessions, which people can attend to share their views about the proposals. The library consultation closes on Friday 27 September.

CITY COUNCIL – 17 SEPTEMBER 2024

WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR DIGITAL, CULTURE, HERITAGE AND TOURISM FROM COUNCILLOR BABER BAZ

Centenary Square fountain

Question:

The water fountain in Centenary Square, a relatively recent addition, appears to have been switched off for many months. Why has it been out of use and is there a plan for it to be fully functional again?

Answer:

The fountains have a scheduled annual maintenance regime and also require some additional remedial work. The options, costs and timing of the work are being assessed and if approved at spend control would commence. Once scheduled, I will be in a position to advise further.

CITY COUNCIL – 17 SEPTEMBER 2024

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR DIGITAL, CULTURE,
HERITAGE & TOURISM FROM COUNCILLOR BABER BAZ**

Small Heath Leisure Centre

Question:

The Small Heath Leisure Centre has been without a Swimming Pool. Can you please tell me if the contract work for the work to begin has been decided yet? And if not when can we expect a date?

Answer:

The project to bring the pool back into operation was deferred by the spending controls introduced to stabilise the Council's financial position. Obviously, revenue and capital resources remain severely constrained, but I have asked officers to explore how we might bring the project forward again. This would be in the context of the final phase of transformation for the leisure facilities remaining in the direct management of the Council (target implementation date 2027).

E1

CITY COUNCIL – 17 SEPTEMBER 2024

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT AND
TRANSPORT FROM COUNCILLOR ADAM HIGGS**

“Potholes”

Question:

How many potholes were repaired last financial year (split between permanent and temporary repairs)

Answer:

From 01/04/2023 to 31/03/2024:

4872 temporary repairs were carried out.

4191 full repairs were completed on initial attendance.

6383 pothole/patch ‘full’ repairs were made.

CITY COUNCIL – 17 SEPTEMBER 2024

WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT AND TRANSPORT FROM COUNCILLOR ADRIAN DELANEY

“Manhole covers”

Question:

Broken down by constituency, how many manhole covers were reported missing in each month since April 2021

Answer:

	2021								
Ward	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
Acocks Green			1						
Allens Cross									
Alum Rock							1		
Aston		1		1					1
Balsall Heath West	1				1				
Bartley Green		1		1	2	4			
Billesley								1	
Birchfield									
Bordesley & Highgate						1	1		
Bordesley Green	1								
Bournbrook & Selly Park									
Bournville & Cotteridge					1				
Brandwood & Kings Heath	2			1	1				1
Bromford & Hodge Hill			1						
Castle Vale								1	
Druids Heath & Monyhull	1		1	1					
Edgbaston			2	1		2	2		1
Erdington							1	1	
Frankley Great Park				1				1	1
Garretts Green	1								
Glebe Farm & Tile Cross		1			1				
Gravelly Hill					1				
Hall Green									1

Handsworth		1							
Handsworth Wood						1			
Harborne					3				2
Heartlands									
Highters Heath				1					
Holyhead		1							
Kings Norton			1	1			1		
Kingstanding			1						1
Ladywood	4		2	2			1	1	
Longbridge & West Heath			1	1					
Lozells									
Moseley					3		1		
Nechells	2	1			1	1		2	3
Newtown	6		1						
Northfield			1						
Oscott									
Perry Barr					1				1
Perry Common									
Pype Hayes				1					
Quinton			1						
Rubery & Rednal									1
Sheldon		1			1	1			
Small Heath			1					1	
Soho & Jewellery Quarter						2			2
South Yardley				1					
Sparkbrook & Balsall Heath Eas				2			1	1	
Sparkhill									
Stirchley									
Stockland Green									
Sutton Four Oaks		1			1				
Sutton Mere Green						1			
Sutton Reddicap									
Sutton Roughley									
Sutton Trinity									
Sutton Vesey				2		1		2	
Sutton Walmley & Minworth	2								
Sutton Wylde Green				2					
Tyseley & Hay Mills									
Ward End									
Weoley & Selly Oak									
Yardley East									

Yardley West & Stechford				1			1	1	2
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	2022											
Ward	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
Acocks Green				1	1							
Allens Cross												
Alum Rock		1					1				1	
Aston											1	
Balsall Heath West				1					1			
Bartley Green	1		1	1			4	2				
Billesley												
Birchfield												
Bordesley & Highgate	1				2				1		1	1
Bordesley Green												
Bournbrook & Selly Park									2			
Bournville & Cotteridge					1				1			
Brandwood & Kings Heath			1							1		
Bromford & Hodge Hill			1				1					
Castle Vale	1				1							
Druids Heath & Monyhull							1				1	1
Edgbaston	1	2								1		2
Erdington				1		2		1				
Frankley Great Park							1					
Garretts Green												
Glebe Farm & Tile Cross										1		
Gravelly Hill				1							1	
Hall Green									1			
Handsworth					1						1	
Handsworth Wood		1										
Harborne				1			7	1				
Heartlands							1		1			
Highters Heath												
Holyhead												
Kings Norton								6		2		
Kingstanding			1			2						
Ladywood	1		1	1	1			2	1	1	2	
Longbridge & West Heath					1	1	1	1		1		
Lozells			1									
Moseley							1					
Nechells					1				1			1

Newtown		1	1								1	
Northfield								2				
Oscott						5	2	1	1			
Perry Barr								1		1	1	
Perry Common												
Pype Hayes											2	
Quinton			1		2			1		1		
Rubery & Rednal										1		
Sheldon				1					1		1	
Small Heath				1	1			1				1
Soho & Jewellery Quarter		2						1				1
South Yardley					1				1			
Sparkbrook & Balsall Heath Eas				1							1	
Sparkhill												
Stirchley												1
Stockland Green	1											
Sutton Four Oaks		1							1		2	
Sutton Mere Green												
Sutton Reddicap					1							
Sutton Roughley												
Sutton Trinity		1										1
Sutton Vesey	1								2			
Sutton Walmley & Minworth												
Sutton Wylde Green			1									
Tyseley & Hay Mills	1				1							
Ward End									1			
Weoley & Selly Oak			1					8				
Yardley East												
Yardley West & Stechford						1						

	2023											
Ward	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
Acocks Green												
Allens Cross												
Alum Rock		1					1		2		1	
Aston	1	2	2			1	1					
Balsall Heath West									1			
Bartley Green		1	1								1	1
Billesley										1		
Birchfield									1			

Bordesley & Highgate					1		2		1			
Bordesley Green						1	1				1	
Bournbrook & Selly Park				1			1					
Bournville & Cotteridge							1		2		1	
Brandwood & Kings Heath					1							
Bromford & Hodge Hill	1			1				1				
Castle Vale												
Druids Heath & Monyhull						1						
Edgbaston	1			1		2	3				1	
Erdington	1		1			1						
Frankley Great Park							1					
Garretts Green										1		
Glebe Farm & Tile Cross	1					1						
Gravelly Hill												
Hall Green												
Handsworth					1							
Handsworth Wood						1						1
Harborne			1					2	1			
Heartlands												
Highters Heath				1	1				1			
Holyhead												
Kings Norton							2			1	1	
Kingstanding												
Ladywood	2	2		1	1	2			1		1	
Longbridge & West Heath						1				1		
Lozells												
Moseley						1						
Nechells	1	1	1	1	1	2						1
Newtown												
Northfield	1											
Oscott	2			1								1
Perry Barr				1	2							
Perry Common												
Pype Hayes	1					2			1			
Quinton					1							
Rubery & Rednal									2			
Sheldon			1	1								
Small Heath						1						
Soho & Jewellery Quarter										1		
South Yardley									1			
Sparkbrook & Balsall Heath Eas							2			1		

Sparkhill						2			1			
Stirchley						1					1	
Stockland Green	1											
Sutton Four Oaks		1										
Sutton Mere Green				1								
Sutton Reddicap					1		3					
Sutton Roughley						1						
Sutton Trinity							4					
Sutton Vesey						1			1			
Sutton Walmley & Minworth	1					1	1					
Sutton Wylde Green					1		1					
Tyseley & Hay Mills					1	1	1	1				
Ward End							2					
Weoley & Selly Oak			1					1				
Yardley East												1
Yardley West & Stechford						1						

	2024								
Ward	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP
Acocks Green									
Allens Cross							4		
Alum Rock									
Aston			1						1
Balsall Heath West									
Bartley Green		2							
Billesley						1			
Birchfield	1								
Bordesley & Highgate		1	2	3	4				
Bordesley Green	1			1				1	
Bournbrook & Selly Park								1	
Bournville & Cotteridge							5		1
Brandwood & Kings Heath	1	1							
Bromford & Hodge Hill				2					
Castle Vale									
Druids Heath & Monyhull									
Edgbaston	1	1					1	1	1
Erdington	3								
Frankley Great Park							3		
Garretts Green			1						
Glebe Farm & Tile Cross									

Gravelly Hill	1						2		
Hall Green									1
Handsworth			1						
Handsworth Wood		1	1						
Harborne	2								
Heartlands			1						
Highters Heath								1	
Holyhead									
Kings Norton			2	1	6		11	9	
Kingstanding									
Ladywood			1	1	2			1	1
Longbridge & West Heath				7		13	12	8	
Lozells									
Moseley									
Nechells			1				2		
Newtown					1	1	1		
Northfield							1		
Oscott			1				1	1	
Perry Barr							2		
Perry Common							1		
Pype Hayes			1		1		1		
Quinton	1							1	
Rubery & Rednal							5		1
Sheldon									
Small Heath				1					
Soho & Jewellery Quarter		1	1	1	3		1		
South Yardley								1	
Sparkbrook & Balsall Heath Eas			2						
Sparkhill							1	1	1
Stirchley									
Stockland Green	4	1					1		
Sutton Four Oaks									
Sutton Mere Green									
Sutton Reddicap									
Sutton Roughley								1	
Sutton Trinity				1				1	
Sutton Vesey					1				
Sutton Walmley & Minworth	1	1						2	
Sutton Wylde Green									
Tyseley & Hay Mills									
Ward End									

Weoley & Selly Oak				1			5		
Yardley East							1		
Yardley West & Stechford		1							

CITY COUNCIL – 17 SEPTEMBER 2024

WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT AND TRANSPORT FROM COUNCILLOR ALEX YIP

“Vehicle Hire”

Question:

In each month since April 2023, broken down by month, please list the total of number of vehicles hired for fleet and waste, the total amount spent, and the name of the hire company used

Answer:

Month	Total Vehicles Hired	Total Spent	Hire Companies
Information relating to 2023/24 will be forwarded separately when it is fully collated.			
April 24	89	£145,281	Priority Mid Hire Dawson Group Endurance Northgate Days Rental
May 24	89	£152,687	Priority Mid Hire Dawson Group Endurance Northgate Days Rental
June 24	89	£147,199	Priority Mid Hire Dawson Group Endurance Northgate Days Rental
July 24	90	£152,629	Priority Mid Hire Dawson Group Endurance Northgate

			Days Rental
August 24	88	£151,536	Priority Mid Hire Dawson Group Endurance Northgate Days Rental

E4

CITY COUNCIL – 17 SEPTEMBER 2024

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT AND
TRANSPORT FROM COUNCILLOR BRUCE LINES**

“Tame Valley Viaduct contract management”

Question:

The mitigation for overruns and overspends on the tame valley viaduct was to ‘employ experienced and professional site and contract management team who will implement a robust management and commercial system’ - how much has the council spent on this experienced and professional team?

Answer:

The procurement of a suitable consultant for undertaking site supervision, contract and commercial management tasks was undertaken using a mini competition under the Birmingham City Council’s Transportation and Connectivity Infrastructure Framework Contract. Following the issue of an order in February 2022, the consultant commenced work in March 2022 and the expenditure to date is £2.397m.

CITY COUNCIL – 17 SEPTEMBER 2024

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT AND
TRANSPORT FROM COUNCILLOR CLIFTON WELCH**

“Road repair response times”

Question:

What changes have been agreed to response times for highways repairs with Keir, on what date was this agreed and what assessment was made of risk to highways users and financial risks to council from potential claims, as a result of any increase in response times?

Answer:

In light of the uncertainty around the Highways PFI contract it has been necessary to make some changes to the Interim Services Contract with Kier. These changes are financially prudent while ensuring that the Council maintains its statutory duties under Section 41 of the Highways Act.

Response times for safety critical issues on the highway infrastructure are unchanged. The changes have been agreed and implemented on an incremental basis made from April and assessments of all risks is done on an ongoing basis in-line with the Council's Safety Inspection Strategy.

Officers will forward more detail to Elected Members.

CITY COUNCIL – 17 SEPTEMBER 2024

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT AND
TRANSPORT FROM COUNCILLOR DARIUS SANDHU**

“Fleet and Waste vehicle hire”

Question:

Please list all dates on which 114 control board approval was given for the purchase of hire vehicles for fleet and waste and the value of that approval

Answer:

Spend approval as follows:

- 30/11/23 ID no. 1045 for £3.5m
- 2/5/24 ID No. 6305 for £1.25m
- 28/8/24 ID no. 8836 for £3.1m

E7

CITY COUNCIL – 17 SEPTEMBER 2024

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT AND
TRANSPORT FROM COUNCILLOR EWAN MACKEY**

“Grass Cutting”

Question:

What is the maximum length of grass that the council's standard grounds maintenance equipment can cut and how many occasions in each of the last 3 years has the council been unable to cut grass on council owned land using its standard equipment, due to the length of the grass being too long?

Answer:

The standard machinery used to cut grass can cut up to a maximum length of approximately 8 inches. If the grass is longer, due to weather conditions access problems etc other machinery that can cope with longer grass is deployed. All cuts take place, however on some occasions it may be later than scheduled due to underlying factors as highlighted.

CITY COUNCIL – 17 SEPTEMBER 2024

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT AND
TRANSPORT FROM COUNCILLOR DAVID PEARS**

“Waste vehicle hire”

Question:

Please list all companies on the framework contract for the hire of waste vehicles.

Answer:

On the Yorkshire Purchasing Organisation (YPO) framework the companies are as follows:

CP Davidson
Castlereagh Motos
Dawson Group
Cooper Group
Dennis Eagle
Elektra
Endurance
Farid Hillend
Faun Zoeller
Garwood
Geesink Norba
John G Russell
Macpac
NTM GB
Riverside NRG
Romaquip Ltd
SFS
Stock Rental
Trest Ltd
Bucher municipal
Days rental
Econ engineering
Hako
James A Cuthbertson Limited,
Karcher UK,
Leeds Commercial Ltd,
Limesquare Vehicle Rental Limited,
London Hire,
Lynton Trailers UK Limited,

Mistral Bus & Coach Plc,
Multevo Ltd, Neat Vehicles Ltd,
Pelican Engineering Company (Sales) Ltd,
Torton Bodies Limited,
Trash Uk Limited,
Victory

CITY COUNCIL – 17 SEPTEMBER 2024

WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT AND TRANSPORT FROM COUNCILLOR DEBBIE CLANCY

“Grass cutting staff”

Question:

In the month of June in each of the last 5 years, how many staff were available in each constituency for grass cutting?

Answer:

Answer:

Northfield and Edgbaston

2020	50
2021	48
2022	52
2023	48
2024	39

Sutton Coldfield

2020	13
2021	11
2022	12
2023	13
2024	10

Yardley & Hodge Hill

2020	32
2021	33
2022	36
2023	36
2024	31

Erdington

2020	20
2021	15
2022	17
2023	19
2024	13

Ladywood

2020	21
2021	21
2022	22
2023	22
2024	19

Hall Green

2020	20
2021	20
2022	21
2023	14
2024	14

Perry Barr

Selly Oak

2020	24	2020	22
2021	21	2021	22
2022	29	2022	23
2023	28	2023	16
2024	21	2024	15

CITY COUNCIL – 17 SEPTEMBER 2024

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT AND
TRANSPORT FROM COUNCILLOR DEIRDRE ALDEN**

“Road Closures”

Question:

Over the last 3 years please list all road closures by developers for construction work within the ring road, including the length of closure and the amount paid by developers to the council for this closure.

Answer:

There were 2364 specified licences issued in Wards that wholly or partly comprise of those within the ring road from 01 January 2021 to date, broken down as follows:

Bordesley & Highgate - 423

Ladywood - 1141

Soho & Jewellery Quarter - 470

Newtown - 169

Aston - 161

The historic systems for managing specified licences do not allow a readily available break down by work type, cost or whether a road closure was required.

As part of the amalgamation and transformation of specified licences into the Streetworks Permitting team, these shortcomings are being addressed to enable a better intelligence picture for how developers are operating on the Highways to be produced.

CITY COUNCIL – 17 SEPTEMBER 2024

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT AND
TRANSPORT FROM COUNCILLOR GARETH MOORE**

“Tame Valley Viaduct project reviews”

Question:

The risk register for the Tame Valley viaduct said that all variations and changes will be fully reviewed and cost increases verified as soon as possible’ since the cabinet decision in 2019 please list all dates on which a project review identified a cost increase, how much this increase was, what it related to, and what mitigations were put in place at the time.

Answer:

The ongoing Tame Valley Viaduct (TVV) strengthening scheme is being delivered under the conditions of the Engineering and Construction Contract.

The scheme undergoes regular contract, commercial and risk management reviews. These include weekly reviews and monthly updates of the risk register including mitigation measures. In addition, regular quantitative and qualitative risk assessments are also undertaken.

The main additional risks / issues identified for the project are;

1. Inflationary pressures -the level of inflation was many time greater than expected when the 2019 Cabinet report was submitted.
2. Presence of Hexavalent Chromium in the paint system resulting in significant additional health and safety measures.
3. Latent defects including microcracking of structural members, welds and corroded steel component following removal of the paint system in the structure.

A detailed review of the scope of the works with the aim of keeping the costs as close as possible to the approved budget is being undertaken. The proposals being evaluated include;

- Omission of works relating to the viaducts structural elements where immediate repairs are not required,
- Reduction in the amount of painting works
- Acceleration of works to reduce the costs associated with extension of time and contractor’s site set up.

Currently, the revised costs and scope of the works are being reviewed by the project's commercial and contract management team in conjunction with the appointed contractor.

CITY COUNCIL – 17 SEPTEMBER 2024

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT AND
TRANSPORT FROM COUNCILLOR KERRY BREWER**

“Ground Maintenance KPIs”

Question:

Since the Grounds Maintenance Service was taken in-house 5 year ago, please list the KPIs the service has been working too and the latest performance against each of these

Answer:

The grass cutting schedules currently equate to 10 cuts per year. Crews are dispatched using schedule maps to work across the city and as one cut completes the next one begins. This is backed up by strimming and hand mowing crews, that strim around the perimeters and hand mow along the edges where the larger ride on mowers cannot reach, or where the area to be mowed is better carried out by a hand mower. The crews are overseen by performance managers that manage the day-to-day expectations of the crews and they carry out random physical checks to ensure work is completed to the required standard.

The growing season runs for 30 weeks of the year and at the end of the mowing season the crews move on to the winter works. This is cutting back hedgerows from across the city, carried out in the winter months so that the spring bird nesting season is not interrupted and wildlife around Birmingham is maintained.

The service is currently looking at technology to help manage and monitor the schedules and it is envisaged that this management system will be more interactive in how the service is delivered.

E13

CITY COUNCIL – 17 SEPTEMBER 2024

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT AND
TRANSPORT FROM COUNCILLOR MAUREEN CORNISH**

“Green Flag Parks”

Question:

How many (and which) parks were awarded Green Flag status in 2024?

Answer:

The City Council did not enter the green flag awards in 2024.

CITY COUNCIL – 17 SEPTEMBER 2024

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT AND
TRANSPORT FROM COUNCILLOR MEIRION JENKINS**

“Kier Payments”

Question:

In each year since Kier took over the highways contract, how much has the council paid to them, split between payments inside and outside the PFI contract

Answer:

Financial Year	Payment to Kier for Services
2020-21	£ 48,927,597.69
2021-22	£ 90,176,734.75
2022-23	£ 102,648,817.04
2023-24	£ 99,934,697.63
2024-25 as at Aug-24	£ 31,812,811.49

CITY COUNCIL – 17 SEPTEMBER 2024

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT AND
TRANSPORT FROM COUNCILLOR TIMOTHY HUXTABLE**

“Tame Valley Viaduct funding”

Question:

When the previous Conservative Government committed £72m towards the £93m forecast cost of the Tame Valley Viaduct Strengthening Work, Baroness Vere described the viaduct as the ‘lifeblood of Birmingham.’ With the latest financial monitoring report describing the project as a financial risk to the council - despite 21% contingency built into the original bid - will the council be showing the same commitment to this scheme as the previous government and ensure funding is in place to complete the scheme in full and to the standard required within the original bid?

Answer:

Requests for potential additional capital funding for 2026/27 and 2027/28 have been submitted to the council’s Capital Board as a financially prudent step to ensure the project delivers its intended objectives.

E16

CITY COUNCIL – 17 SEPTEMBER 2024

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT AND
TRANSPORT FROM COUNCILLOR ROBERT ALDEN**

“Replacement and new bins”

Question:

In each month for the last 2 years, how many residents paid for a new or replacement wheelie bin and how many of these are still waiting for their bin?

Answer:

Attached below is a table over the last 2 years which includes the number of residents who paid for a replacement wheelie bin.

Month and year request received	Total Number Requested
08/2022	316
09/2022	329
10/2022	287
11/2022	278
12/2022	367
01/2023	311
02/2023	350
03/2023	308
04/2023	311
05/2023	293
06/2023	285
07/2023	288
08/2023	277
09/2023	301
10/2023	261
11/2023	267
12/2023	340
01/2024	305
02/2024	285

03/2024	292
04/2024	264
05/2024	266
06/2024	299
07/2024	262
08/2024	316

As at the end of August, there were 1,950 classed as outstanding deliveries on the database. It is estimated that circa 80% of these have been delivered but the job is yet to be closed down on the system.

E17

CITY COUNCIL – 17 SEPTEMBER 2024

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT AND
TRANSPORT FROM COUNCILLOR DAVID BARRIE**

“Recycling”

Question:

In each month since April 2022, how many rounds for recycling were collected with general waste rather than kept separate for recycling?

Answer:

Unfortunately, we do not have historical information on a round-by-round basis. The new IT platform, currently being procured and the new fleet of vehicles will allow far more visibility of information relating to waste collections and how individual waste streams are collected

CITY COUNCIL – 17 SEPTEMBER 2024

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT AND
TRANSPORT FROM COUNCILLOR RON STORER**

“Fortnightly Collections”

Question:

Councillor Waseem Zaffar has been reported as telling Lozells residents in a community whatsapp group that 'there is fake news beign disseminated that our rubbish collection in Lozells is going fortnightly. This is not the case.' and that "weekly rubbish collections are continuing in Lozells" Please list all other wards that will retain weekly residual waste collections following completion of the transformation programme?

Answer:

The city will move to a fortnightly residual waste collection on a phased basis commencing April 2025.

It is anticipated that all wards and therefore all 340,000 kerbside properties will move to this service. In addition to moving to a fortnightly waste collection service there will also be the introduction of weekly food waste and additional container for recycling will be introduced at the same time.

CITY COUNCIL – 17 SEPTEMBER 2024

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT AND
TRANSPORT FROM COUNCILLOR JON HUNT**

Brum Breathes funding

Question:

The Cabinet is rolling up unallocated Brum Breathes funds into a new citywide fund. What are the criteria for ‘unused’ given that many projects appear not to have been progressed due to lack of engineering capacity, as discussed in a recent Council meeting?

Answer:

The criteria used to determine the amount of ‘unused’ budget from the Brum Breathes Fund is whether or not an application to the Fund has been received from that ward.

To date the Fund has received 23 applications from 20 wards. Of the applications received 12 have been approved. The remainder are either awaiting further information or may be incorporated into the delivery programme for the Environment and Neighbourhoods Transport Fund (ETNF).

Of the applications that have been approved (12) four have been completed, four are in progress – with the remainder awaiting updates from the relevant delivery team. It is important to note that the Brum Breathes Fund was open to applications from the community therefore delivery of an approved scheme could be through any relevant Birmingham City Council service or a community group.

CITY COUNCIL – 17 SEPTEMBER 2024

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT AND
TRANSPORT FROM COUNCILLOR ROGER HARMER**

Fly tipping locations in Yardley

Question:

Which locations in the Yardley Constituency have had BCC CCTV installed to tackle fly tipping in the past 2 years? What were the results of these operations?

Answer:

Waste Enforcement cameras have been installed at 12 locations within Yardley Constituency with 5 sites still active. These installations have resulted in 62 incidents of vehicle based tipping being captured on camera and 29 pedestrians seen offending.

It has not been possible to identify in such a short period of time the outcomes of these interventions. A separate email will be sent to Cllr Harmer once this has been compiled with information on locations and outcomes.

CITY COUNCIL – 17 SEPTEMBER 2024

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT AND
TRANSPORT FROM COUNCILLOR BABAR BAZ**

Gully cleaning and maintenance

Question:

Could the Cabinet Member provide a schedule of gully cleaning and maintenance undertaken by Kier? Given the increase in rainfall recorded, it is vital that gullies are clean and able to meet the drainage requirements of the City therefore preventing unnecessary flooding.

Response

Gullies are inspected and cleaned when appropriate.

CITY COUNCIL – 17 SEPTEMBER 2024

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT AND
TRANSPORT FROM COUNCILLOR PAUL TILSLEY**

Average Speed Cameras on A45 Coventry Road

Question:

When will the promised average speed cameras for the A45 Coventry Road be installed? Sheldon Ward's portion of the A45 is subject to weekly serious Road Traffic Accidents causing considerable inconvenience and distress to local residents

Answer:

The Council along with the other West Midlands District Authorities is working with the West Midlands Combined Authority and West Midlands Police on a new regional agreement for Average Speed Enforcement covering existing sites and roll-out of new locations. This will include criteria for enforcement locations which is yet to be determined. We cannot therefore say at the present time which locations will be prioritised and when, but the A45 Coventry Road is one of the roads which we will be putting forward for consideration in due course.

E23

CITY COUNCIL – 17 SEPTEMBER 2024

**PLEASE NOTE WRITTEN QUESTION E23 - HAS NOW BEEN
REDIRECTED TO H8 – CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING AND
HOMELESSNESS**

E24

CITY COUNCIL – 17 SEPTEMBER 2024

**PLEASE NOTE WRITTEN QUESTION E24 - HAS NOW BEEN
REDIRECTED TO F24 – CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE**

CITY COUNCIL – 17 SEPTEMBER 2024

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT AND
TRANSPORT FROM COUNCILLOR MATT BENNETT**

“Additional Recycling container”

Question:

Please provide a copy of the data evidencing how the c12k people with an additional recycling bin for paper have less contamination than those with pod inserts, as you referenced at Cabinet on 10 September. Please note, this relates to the Birmingham specific data you referred to, and not the evidence from other local authorities already set out in the report.

Answer:

The current trial of the second recycling container is still in its early stages and we are yet to have meaningful data to be shared. What we can confirm is, that other authorities who adopt this twin bin solution all evidence contamination rates are in line with the nation average of 12%

CITY COUNCIL – 17 SEPTEMBER 2024

WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE FROM
COUNCILLOR DEIRDRE ALDEN

“Planning budget”

Question:

What was the total gross and net budget for the planning department in each of year since April 2020?

Answer:

Planning Service Budget

	2020/21 £	2021/22 £	2022/23 £	2023/24 £	2024/25 £
Total Expenditure	6,934,599	6,606,729	7,084,985	6,532,618	5,722,038
Total Income	(5,729,043)	(5,725,583)	(5,677,828)	(5,745,267)	(5,545,267)
Net Expenditure	1,205,556	881,146	1,407,157	787,351	176,771

CITY COUNCIL – 17 SEPTEMBER 2024

WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE FROM COUNCILLOR ROBERT ALDEN

“Duplicate Payments”

Question:

Since April 2022, broken down by department, please list the total number and total value of duplicate payments discovered, and the amount reclaimed.

Answer:

Across all transactional services Directorates over the period of **April 22 – March 23** we have identified 747 overpayments with a total value of £2.4m

Directorate	Total
Adults Social Care	£86,935.20
Partnerships Insight & Prevention	£12,123.56
Commonwealth Games 2022	£0.00
Digital & Customer	£66,917.05
Education & Skills	£1,204,688.76
Finance & Governance	£95,983.46
HR & Organisational Development	£2,124.30
Inclusive Growth	£83,475.71
Neighbourhoods	£171,960.43
Schools	£371,919.64
Non-BCC 3 rd party live	£0.00
BCT	£343,937.83
Acivico	£0.00
	£2,440,065.94

In the same period we have identified 671 recovering items with a total value of £2.3m

Directorate	Total
Adults Social Care	£80,088.54
Partnerships Insight & Prevention	£12,123.56
Commonwealth Games 2022	£0.00
Digital & Customer	£66,917.05
Education & Skills	£1,179,458.52
Finance & Governance	£95,983.46
HR & Organisational Development	£2,124.30
Inclusive Growth	£83,475.71
Neighbourhoods	£156,002.27
Schools	£317,068.77
Non-BCC 3 rd party live	£0.00
BCT	£275,220.93
Acivico	£0.00
	£2,268,463.11

Across all transactional services Directorates over the period of **April 23 – March 24** we have identified 1328 overpayments with a total value of £9.4m

	Grand Total
Children and Families Director	£4,992,750.55
City Ops Directorate	£482,490.53
Birmingham Children's Trust	£274,154.83
Non-BCC	£36,101.50
Adults Social Care Directorate	£1,241,174.52
(blank)	£477,226.30
Council Management	£510,642.73
Places, Prosperity & Sustainab	£361,556.91
City Housing Directorate	£122,205.37
No Directorate	£258,237.37
Strategy, Equalities & Partners	£19,940.00
Finance Control	£612,946.35
VAT	£13,693.27
	£9,403,120.23

In the same period we have identified 1242 recovering items with a total value of £8.7m

	Grand Total
(blank)	£4,860,248.76
City Ops Directorate	£468,055.84
Children and Families Direc	£164,712.41
Council Management	£35,616.50
City Housing Directorate	£1,239,974.52
Strategy, Equalities & Partne	£471,366.10
Birmingham Children's Trus	£458,563.98
Finance Control	£217,933.71
Places, Prosperity & Sustain	£80,480.36
No Directorate	£258,237.37
Adults Social Care Directorate	£19,940.00
	£465,934.00
	£13,693.27
Grand Total	£8,754,756.82

Across all transactional services Directorates over the period of April 24 – September 24 we have identified 1328 overpayments with a total value of £9.4m

(blank)	59826.22
City Ops Directorate	214983.56
Children and Families Direc	662456.89
Council Management	346760.4
City Housing Directorate	313660.89
Strategy, Equalities & Partne	2427.55
Birmingham Children's Trus	224049.36
Finance Control	1041608.09
Places, Prosperity & Sustain	53274.19
No Directorate	8147.22
Adults Social Care Directorate	122026.49
	3049220.86

Please note that lines labelled as “(blank)” have not been assigned to a Directorate due to missing budget codes.

Question:

In each year since April 2019, how many successful applications were there for a) council tax support scheme, and b) single person discount and what was the total net cost of each scheme in these years?

Answer:

- a) Since April 2019, how many successful applications were there for **council tax support scheme**, and what was the total net cost of each scheme in these years?

1. Successful CTS Claims (Processed and Awarded) by Year

Financial Year	No. of successful claims
2019/20	11223
2020/21	11959
2021/22	9984
2022/23	9513
2023/24	10697
2024/25*	4108

The table shows CTS claims which were processed and awarded a payment of CTS within the financial year. It does not include claims which were decided as ineligible/defective (for example no liability or a person not eligible to claim e.g. student/supporting evidence was not provided) or processed with zero award (for example the household income was too high).

*April to August 2024

2. CT Claim Caseload at Q1 by Year

The table shows the caseload of active CTS claims as of April of each year.

Month	Year	No. of cases
April	2019	120240
April	2020	119862
April	2021	120583
April	2022	115957
April	2023	110799
April	2024	113149

3.The Cost of the Scheme by Year

Year	£
2019-2020	£99,749,401.28
2020-2021	£109,012,236.60
2021-2022	£113,382,279.79
2022-2023	£109,913,179.74
2023-2024	£117,350,413.69
2024-2025*	£126,949,531.90

The table shows the cost of the CTS by financial year

*balance at 09.09.24

CITY COUNCIL – 17 SEPTEMBER 2024

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE FROM
COUNCILLOR MATT BENNETT**

“Asset Disposal Programme”

Question:

Please list all assets sold (inc sold subject to contract) as part of the EFS disposal programme target of £750m, that had previously already been earmarked for disposal prior to the EFS request. Please include the original estimated sale receipt, and original planned use of that capital receipt as well as the final selling price

Answer:

Please find below the list of completed cases with detail regarding pre/post EFS decisions and rent loss implications.

With regards to information on properties sold “subject to contract”, this is commercially sensitive. Where sale contracts have exchanged but not completed there’s a risk they won’t complete.

In terms of use of the receipts, all Commercial Portfolio disposals were previously (Prior to EFS) earmarked for re-investment in new higher yielding Commercial Assets or in the Improvement of existing Commercial Assets to increase returns as per the approved Investment Property Strategy.

General Fund Disposals were previously used as part of the Corporate Capital Budget, managed by Corporate Finance.

CITY COUNCIL – 17 SEPTEMBER 2024

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE FROM
COUNCILLOR KERRY BREWER**

“Asset Disposal Programme revenue impact”

Question:

For all assets sold, or agreed to be sold, under the EFS assets disposal programme, what is the total lost revenue per year?

Answer:

Since the start of the £750m Asset Disposals Programme (ADP) and the EFS, the Qualifying Assets sold to date are £116.2m. The Annualised Rental Income Loss associated with the sales is £1.2m.

The Total Annualised Rental Income Loss Forecast for the cases we currently have in the Full Programme is approx. £10.2m.

CITY COUNCIL – 17 SEPTEMBER 2024

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE FROM
COUNCILLOR DEBBIE CLANCY**

“Insurance”

Question:

Please list all payments to insurance companies for products not procured centrally through the finance team?

Answer:

There are two Insurance policies outside the Finance Team that we have been able to identify

Liability Insurance for the Friends of Parks Groups while doing light maintenance work and litter picking in Council parks and green areas. Annual Premium £20,000.

Liability insurance for Allotment Associations acting on behalf of BCC while managing allotments owned by the Council. Annual Premium £14,500.

We are aware that at least one property contract includes an insurance element.

It is possible that insurance related payments have been made to other entities who are not generally considered as insurance companies for the purposes of managing risk to Birmingham City Council.

More work will be conducted to identify these potential payments and every effort to centralise these into the insurance team will be made.

Both of the above policies and any additional policies identified will be reviewed by the insurance department prior to their renewal.

CITY COUNCIL – 17 SEPTEMBER 2024

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE FROM
COUNCILLOR MAUREEN CORNISH**

“Wifi Upgrade”

Question:

For the recent procurement of Cisco wifi upgrade to the council house, what procurement route was followed and what was the total cost (split between implementation cost and ongoing revenue cost)

Answer:

The upgrade to the Council House WiFi was undertaken using framework call off agreements the Council has in place for undertaking building surveys, cabling, hardware and specialist technical resources.

The implementation cost was £43,742.

There are no on-going revenue costs. This is because the Council maintains a small stock of replacement WiFi Access Points (AP's) which will be used to swap out any faulty WiFi AP's. Therefore, no maintenance contract is required on the additional WiFi AP's in the Council House.

CITY COUNCIL – 17 SEPTEMBER 2024

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE FROM
COUNCILLOR ADRIAN DELANEY**

“Plan B Management Solutions consultancy work”

Question:

On 21 May 2024 a contract notice was published for a contract with Plan B Management Solutions under Direct Award for consultancy services within Waste Services worth £175k to run from 1 July 2024 to 31 March 2025

On 18 July 2024 a contract notice was published for a contract with Plan B Management Solutions under Direct Award for consultancy services within Waste Services worth £163,125 to run from 15 July 2024 to 31 March 2025

Taken separately both these contracts fall below the thresholds for public contract regulations, however, the combined total is above thresholds which would have required, amongst other things, greater competition (or explicit justification for avoiding competition) as well as reporting through the procurement intentions report process and contract award schedule to Cabinet.

What was the justification for these two contracts - both running concurrently, both for management consultancy, both for the same service area, and both awarded to the same company without competition - being treated as separate contracts, and on what date did each receive approval from the spend control board?

Answer:

The two contracts are unrelated and deliver different services. There is no link between the two contracts. One contract (worth £175k to run from 1 July 2024 to 31 March 2025) is to continue to support the IRP priority waste transformation programme, and the other (worth £163,125 to run from 15 July 2024 to 31 March 2025) is to deliver much needed improvement and transformation to the fleet service that supports all parts of Street Scene (including waste) as well as other parts of the Council.

Approval was given at Corporate Spend Control Board on 04/04/24 for the Waste transformation spend of which these 2 contracts form a part of.

CITY COUNCIL – 17 SEPTEMBER 2024

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE FROM
COUNCILLOR ADAM HIGGS**

“Highbury Hall Income”

Question:

What was the net income for the general fund from Highbury Hall in each of the last 6 years?

Answer:

The City Council's Civic Catering service has operated from Highbury Hall for a number of years. Over the last six years the service has generated the following trading position for the General Fund from its Highbury activities:

FY18/19 - £71.8k surplus
FY19/20 - £74.5k surplus
FY20/21 - £180k deficit
FY21/22 - £201.3k deficit
FY22/23 - £96.9k surplus
FY23/24 - £8.6k deficit

This includes the payment of a property rental to the Highbury Trust.

CITY COUNCIL – 17 SEPTEMBER 2024

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE FROM
COUNCILLOR TIMOTHY HUXTABLE**

“Contract Register”

Question:

The Local Government Transparency Code requires councils to include in their contract register, details of whether or not a supplier is a small or medium-sized enterprise and/or a voluntary or community sector organisation. However, like much else, this is missing from the data published by the council, in breach of the statutory code. As well as committing to including this information going forward, please list here the percentage (of both total number and total value) of contracts with SMEs and VCS organisations and list the top ten SME and top ten VCS contractors by value?

Answer:

There are 1092 live contracts on the system. Out of these 1092 contracts, 11 are flagged as SMEs and 4 are flagged as VCSEs. The remainder are not known. The supplier data shows that 18 of the 8227 active suppliers have the VCS flag set to Y and 108 have the SME flag set to Y, the remainder are not known. The spend data over the previous 12 months show that 5% of the spend was with suppliers with SME flag set to Y and 1% with VCS.

Acknowledging that these flags are sparsely populated on the current systems, we propose to take the following actions:

1. Message all suppliers, requesting that they update their records with the SME (Y/N) and VCSE (Y/N) information.
2. Make it a mandatory requirement that the SME and VCSE flags are recorded when registering a contract.

These actions will be initiated within 2 weeks. The reports will be rerun and shared in January 2025 which should show a marked improvement.

The new Procurement Act (PA23) contains enhanced transparency requirements. A programme of works is currently underway to ensure that the council is compliant with these requirements. The first publication of the data is due on 01/04/202

F11

CITY COUNCIL – 17 SEPTEMBER 2024

**PLEASE NOTE WRITTEN QUESTION F11 - HAS NOW BEEN REDIRECTED
TO B7 – DEPUTY LEADER**

F12

CITY COUNCIL – 17 SEPTEMBER 2024

**PLEASE NOTE WRITTEN QUESTION F12 - HAS NOW BEEN REDIRECTED
TO B8 – DEPUTY LEADER**

F13

CITY COUNCIL – 17 SEPTEMBER 2024

**PLEASE NOTE WRITTEN QUESTION F13 - HAS NOW BEEN REDIRECTED
TO B9 – DEPUTY LEADER**

F14

CITY COUNCIL – 17 SEPTEMBER 2024

**PLEASE NOTE WRITTEN QUESTION F14 - HAS NOW BEEN REDIRECTED
TO J7 – CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSFORMATION, GOVERNANCE AND
HUMAN RESOURCES**

CITY COUNCIL – 17 SEPTEMBER 2024

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE FROM
COUNCILLOR RICHARD PARKIN**

“Transport Levy”

Question:

What percentage increase in the Transport Levy has been presumed in the MTFP from 25/26 and in each of the following 3 years?

Answer:

The Council reviews the proposed inflationary increase each year, in conjunction with the West Midlands Combined Authority. At present, the current assumption is an increase in line with general price inflation forecasts. This will continue to be reviewed with the WMCA in the run up to budget-setting in February 2025.

F16

CITY COUNCIL – 17 SEPTEMBER 2024

**PLEASE NOTE WRITTEN QUESTION F16 - HAS NOW BEEN
REDIRECTED TO J8 – CABINET MEMBER FOR
TRANSFORMATION, GOVERNANCE AND HUMAN RESOURCES**

CITY COUNCIL – 17 SEPTEMBER 2024

WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE FROM COUNCILLOR DARIUS SANDHU

“Pressures”

Question:

Which pressures were removed from the MTFP for 25/26 and 26/27 following challenge from cabinet members at EMT on 30 July (as stated in paragraph 6.1 of the report to September Cabinet)

Answer:

Directorate	2025/26 Pressure (£)	2026/27 Pressure (£ cumulative)	Evidence Provided?	Comments
Chief Operating Officer	558,000	558,000	Figures only	Review of inflation forecast. Agreed to be removed as a Pressure.
Finance	404,000	404,000	Yes	Review of inflation forecast. Agreed to be removed as a Pressure.
SEP	161,000	161,000	Yes	Review of inflation forecast. Agreed to be removed as a Pressure.
COO, Finance, People Services, Legal & Governance	128,000	128,000	Yes	Review of inflation forecast. Agreed to be removed as a Pressure.
Total	£1.251m	£1.251m		

In regard to the pressures removed due to the inflation this can be found within the section from pages 24-26 on the latest forecasts for pay, general price inflation and specific contract inflation.

CITY COUNCIL – 17 SEPTEMBER 2024

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE FROM
COUNCILLOR RON STORER**

“Public Health Grant”

Question:

What is the size of the deficit on the 5-year Public Health Grant plan as referenced in the September Cabinet report?

Answer:

Public Health manages its budget using a 5-yr budget projection model which has been approved by the s151 and highlighted by the Office of Health Improvement and Disparities as national best practice. The model is based on a series of financial assumptions including.

A 1% annual increase in the public health grant allocation from DHSC

A 1% inflation pressure in block contracts for prescribed and recommended public health services passed to providers with a buffer 2% built into the model for demand pressures and higher inflation, but no inflation pressure on internal recharges or payment by result services.

Integration of cost pressures due to BCC salary increases and estimated NHS salary increases, in line with the 2024/25 shift of responsibilities for the NHS pay settlement for relevant contracts to the Public Health grant.

The 5-yr budget has been updated in the summer of 2024 and this shows that public health grant would fall into deficit in 2027/28 under current projections at which point the ring-fenced reserves will have been exhausted, this is primarily due to the impact of the NHS pay settlement, current and historical, shifting into the Public Health grant in 2024/5 which has not been matched by the uplift in the ring-fenced grant.

The projected deficit in 27/28 is circa £3.4m rising to circa £23.2m in 29/30.

In 2024/25 the Council became responsible for payment of the NHS pay settlement for public health grant funded contracts with NHS providers using NHS terms and conditions. The settlement in the NHS is paid in year through an additional uplift and then integrated into the following years baseline allocation in the recurrent staffing budget. The historical contracts in Birmingham did not account for this pressure transferring so in 2024/25 there has been the pressure of both the 2024/25 settlement in year and the historical cumulative effect of the pay settlements prior to this shift in responsibility.

Work has been undertaken for over a year with the largest contracted providers on improving efficiencies within contracts to enable absorbing these additional costs whilst maintaining service provision effectively for citizens through more agile and integrated service provision. Spend and outcomes have been benchmarked against core cities and work has been undertaken to identify efficiency learning from other areas.

The division has also put in place memorandum of understanding for all internal spend to ensure that this funding is demonstrating value for money and achieving outcomes in line with the Public Health Grant award letter criteria. There has also been a review of headcount spend in the specialist function which demonstrates that the Council is under-powered for specialist capacity and the Director of Public Health has agreed to manage this within the existing headcount through internal restructuring of vacancies into more senior roles to address this.

Birmingham is relatively unique in using this 5-yr budget projection for the grant and this allows us to forecast these challenges well in advance of them becoming a reality and this positions us well to address them in a timely manner to rebalance the grant and ensure the essential work of Public Health protecting and improving the health and Birmingham is relatively unique in using this 5-yr budget projection for the grant and this allows us to forecast these challenges well in advance of them becoming a reality and this positions us well to address them in a timely manner to rebalance the grant and ensure the essential work of Public Health protecting and improving the health and wellbeing of our citizens to continue.

If the pressure of the NHS pay settlement (historical up to March 2024 and current for 24/25) was resolved through national allocation, similar to the approach taken in the NHS finance systems, then the deficit will fall to £0.9m in 28/29 and circa £9.3m in 29/30 which demonstrates that although this impact is significant there is also a continuing need for the grant to achieve efficiencies to remain in balance if the growth in the grant remains at 1% in the allocation from DHSC which is significantly below inflation.

CITY COUNCIL – 17 SEPTEMBER 2024

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE FROM
COUNCILLOR ALEX YIP**

“Public Health Grant and general fund”

Question:

What was the total amount (in cash value and as a percentage of the overall grant) of the public health grant that was used to support general fund pressures in the 24/25 budget?

Answer:

In 2024/25 the annual allocation of the Public Health ring-fenced grant was £101,255,586, and the reserve opening balance was £28.8m.

The recharge to the grant for Council run services in 2024/25 was £17,820,800 (17.6%), although it is important to note that some recharge costs (c. £1.8m) were offset against the remaining Covid funding in line with the criteria of that separate grant funding non-recurrently, so the total contribution from public health to the general fund position in 2024/25 was £19,638,576 (19.4%).

The projected re-charge costs in 2025/26 are £20.6m which is estimated as 20.1%. Some of the internal recharges are fixed term and utilise the ring-fenced reserve to support transformation of some Council services and will cease in 27/28 at which point the projected contribution is forecast to fall to c. £14.9m (circa 14.0% of the projected grant value). Projects still had to meet the criteria for PH funding.

CITY COUNCIL – 17 SEPTEMBER 2024

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE FROM
COUNCILLOR CLIFTON WELCH**

“Traded Services”

Question:

Please provide a list of all traded services that are loss-making (as referenced in the September Cabinet Report) and for each of these, the total loss in each of the last 3 years

Answer:

(Net Surplus) / Loss	£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's
Group 3 - Traded Services	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	3 Year Total
CityServe	454	(144)	(374)	(64)
Pest Control	170	87	344	601
Wildlife Park	131	79	60	270
Total	755	22	30	807

CITY COUNCIL – 17 SEPTEMBER 2024

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE FROM
COUNCILLOR RICHARD PARKIN**

“Acivico”

Question:

Given the expiry of the small works contract between the council and Acivico, what steps are being taken to lawfully and efficiently carry out maintenance of council properties, including schools?

Answer:

The status of the contract is as follows:-

- (A) On 2nd May 2017 the Parties entered into an agreement (“**the Contract**”) pursuant to which Acivico and Acivico DCFM agreed to provide design, construction, facilities management services and integrated services to the Council.
- (B) The First Deed of Variation dealt with the return of the Civic Catering, Birmingham City Laboratory and Building Cleaning Services to the Council.
- (C) The Second and Third Deeds of Variation dealt with extensions to the expiry date of the Contract with the Third Deed of Variation stating that the Contract would expire on 31st March 2020.
- (D) The Council, Acivico and Acivico (DCFM) have agreed to vary the Contract as set out in this Fourth Deed.
- (E) This Fourth Deed is supplemental to the Contract.
- (F) The Parties confirm that a new contract did not come into effect on the 1st of April 2020 as envisaged and the Contract, as varied, continues in effect by way of the conduct of the Parties.

The fourth deed, as mentioned in point (E), is agreed, and is currently with Acivico for signing. This extension will end 31/03/2026 – the extension is in line with the dates agreed in the March 2024 Cabinet report.

We are currently operating the contract in effect by way of the conduct of parties. Maintenance and compliance have continued throughout the period.

CITY COUNCIL – 17 SEPTEMBER 2024

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE FROM
COUNCILLOR EWAN MACKEY**

“Acivico 2”

Question:

Why was the small works contract between the council and Acivico allowed to lapse without a suitable alternative being in place to allow for essential maintenance work on council properties, including schools?

Answer:

The status of the contract is as follows:-

- (A) On 2nd May 2017 the Parties entered into an agreement (“**the Contract**”) pursuant to which Acivico and Acivico DCFM agreed to provide design, construction, facilities management services and integrated services to the Council.
- (B) The First Deed of Variation dealt with the return of the Civic Catering, Birmingham City Laboratory and Building Cleaning Services to the Council.
- (C) The Second and Third Deeds of Variation dealt with extensions to the expiry date of the Contract with the Third Deed of Variation stating that the Contract would expire on 31st March 2020.
- (D) The Council, Acivico and Acivico (DCFM) have agreed to vary the Contract as set out in this Fourth Deed.
- (E) This Fourth Deed is supplemental to the Contract.
- (F) The Parties confirm that a new contract did not come into effect on the 1st of April 2020 as envisaged and the Contract, as varied, continues in effect by way of the conduct of the Parties.

The fourth deed, as mentioned in point (E), is agreed and is with Acivico for signing. This will end 31/03/2026 – the extension is in line with the dates agreed in the March 2024 Cabinet report.

As such, even though the original contract has lapsed, we are currently operating the contract in effect by way of the conduct of parties. Maintenance and compliance has continued throughout the period.

CITY COUNCIL – 17 SEPTEMBER 2024

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE FROM
COUNCILLOR ADAM HIGGS**

“Acivico 3”

Question:

Please provide a list of all maintenance or repairs to council properties, including schools, that have been delayed or cancelled due to the expiry of the small works contract – or other contracts - with Acivico

Answer:

No maintenance or repairs to council properties have been delayed due to the expiry of the small works contract.

The status of the contract is as follows:-

- (A) On 2nd May 2017 the Parties entered into an agreement (“**the Contract**”) pursuant to which Acivico and Acivico DCFM agreed to provide design, construction, facilities management services and integrated services to the Council.
- (B) The First Deed of Variation dealt with the return of the Civic Catering, Birmingham City Laboratory and Building Cleaning Services to the Council.
- (C) The Second and Third Deeds of Variation dealt with extensions to the expiry date of the Contract with the Third Deed of Variation stating that the Contract would expire on 31st March 2020.
- (D) The Council, Acivico and Acivico (DCFM) have agreed to vary the Contract as set out in this Fourth Deed.
- (E) This Fourth Deed is supplemental to the Contract.
- (F) The Parties confirm that a new contract did not come into effect on the 1st of April 2020 as envisaged and the Contract, as varied, continues in effect by way of the conduct of the Parties.

The fourth deed, as mentioned in point (E), is agreed and is currently with Acivico for signing. This extension period will end 31/03/2026 – the extension is in line with the dates agreed in the March 2024 Cabinet report.

We are currently operating the contract in effect by way of the conduct of parties. Maintenance and compliance has continued throughout the period.

Last week following consultation between commissioners and senior officers, it was suggested to put a temporary hold on any further capital works projects being awarded to Acivico. This hold will be lifted once the contract extension is signed this week (we 13/09/2024) as such no delays have been experienced to date, but it is now considered imperative to execute the deed to enable new orders to be placed.

CITY COUNCIL – 17 SEPTEMBER 2024

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE FROM
COUNCILLOR CLIFTON WELCH**

“Pinnacle”

Question:

On 17 April 2023 the council entered into a 5 year contract with Pinnacle Housing for estate management services at Perry Barr to 'include the planning and collection of the service charges and sinking funds; carrying out maintenance, repairs, and inspections to include public realm infrastructure and landscaped areas.' Given the changes to the plans for the future disposal of homes on this site, please can you update on the status of this contract, including costs incurred to date, money still owed, and what services Pinnacle will continue to carry out under the contract or exit fees if the council has now terminated the contract

Answer:

The Pinnacle Estates Management contract has not yet been mobilised, so no monies have been paid or collected, and no services have yet commenced.

The contract is due to commence soon, and we expect it to provide the services that were agreed as part of the tender process. The cost for these services will be shared across all owners who have an interest in the estate (i.e. including the proposed purchaser of plots 6-8) and not just the Council.

The site is currently being maintained by Careys as part of their post completion maintenance agreement which is due to end in March 2025.

CITY COUNCIL – 17 SEPTEMBER 2024

WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS FROM COUNCILLOR GARETH MOORE

“Empty Properties”

Question:

How many council housing properties are currently empty?

Answer:

There are currently 612 council housing void properties empty. This is a snapshot position and dwellings will be in the various phases of the void property process from receipt of keys (from the outgoing tenant) to re-letting.

There are an additional 450 void properties which are pending demolition.

CITY COUNCIL – 17 SEPTEMBER 2024

WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS FROM COUNCILLOR ROBERT ALDEN

“Empty Properties 2”

Question:

In the last 12 months, what is the average length of time a council housing property has been empty and what was the length of the ten longest empty properties?

Answer:

Over the last 12 months (August 2023 to August 2024) the average turnaround times for void properties relet were:

- Routine Voids (not affected by major work items): 31.8 days
- Major works voids including Kitchen & Bathroom replacement, Rewire & structural issues: 105.7 days

A recent House Mark report found that Birmingham City Council is performing in line with national peer group medians on re-let times for both standard and major void dwellings.

The 10 longest empty properties having been let were:

4158 days	Prefabricated bungalow – Grade 2 listed building requiring extensive works and English Heritage consent
3626 days	Prefabricated bungalow – Grade 2 listed building requiring extensive works and English Heritage consent Prefab/ listed
1771 days	Prefabricated bungalow – Grade 2 listed building requiring extensive works and English Heritage consent Prefab / listed
1080 days	Facilitating major capital works to Large Panel System High Rise Building
868 days	Long running legal dispute with owner-occupier adjoining dwelling
679 days	Significant structural works
532 days	Significant structural works

462 days	Significant structural works
448 days	Significant structural works
420 days	Significant structural works

CITY COUNCIL – 17 SEPTEMBER 2024

WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS FROM COUNCILLOR RON STORER

“Temporary Accommodation”

Question:

How many people have been living in temporary accommodation for over 10 years and how many of these were under 18 years of age?

Answer:

24 households have been in temporary accommodation for over 10 years. All are currently in self-contained homes provided either directly by Birmingham City Council or leased from a private landlord. The majority have a housing need requiring between 4 and 8 bedroom homes.

There are 29 individuals within these properties aged under 18 years.

CITY COUNCIL – 17 SEPTEMBER 2024

WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS FROM COUNCILLOR ALEX YIP

“Void properties”

Question:

What is the current average Void property turnaround time and what is the average cost per day to the council of a void property

Answer:

The average turnaround time for August 2024 for voids not affected by major works was 41 days.

Average turnaround time for major works voids for August 2024 was 196 days – this figure is distorted as it includes 2 very long-term voids recently let that are of a 1940's prefabricated construction and are Grade 2 listed buildings requiring major works in accordance with English Heritage approval.

A recent House Mark report found that Birmingham City Council is performing in line with national peer group medians on re-let times for both standard and major void dwellings.

Based on an average weekly rent and charges of circa £120, the average cost per day to BCC when a property is void is approximately £17, annual budgets account for a 1.57% void rate at any point in time and currently the void rate is 1.56%.

Additionally, where our Repairs and Maintenance contractors exceed agreed target completion dates without BCC approval, the daily cost is recoverable from them for any days over the target date.

CITY COUNCIL – 17 SEPTEMBER 2024

WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS FROM COUNCILLOR DEBBIE CLANCY

“Prisoner release”

Question:

What assessment has been made of the potential budgetary and service delivery impact to Birmingham of the government's proposals to release prisoners early and what representations have you made to the government regarding this?

Answer:

Since government approved a Statutory Instrument to reduce the time those sentenced to eligible Standard Determinate Sentences (SDS) serve in prison from 50% to 40% of that sentence (SDS40 for shorthand), officers have been liaising with the Home Office, Prison and Probation services. This has included an understanding of process, numbers and impact about which representations have been made.

Areas of impact have been identified including Housing, Community Safety, Adult Social Care and Treatment Services. In addition, the voluntary and community organisations that provide support.

An internal Continuity of Care Task and Finish Group has been established and is meeting regularly. This will feed into a Birmingham Community Safety Partnership Continuity of Care Task and Finish Group meeting and will also identify any lessons learnt from SDS40 as well as examine prison release pathway/s and associated support. A SITREP meeting is scheduled for actual release days. Learning from tranche 1 will be picked up and fed back to address before tranche 2.

The Birmingham Community Safety Partnership's Reducing Offending Board is meeting on 16/09/2024. A key focus of the meeting will be to identify any lessons learnt from tranche 1 in terms of what worked well and any areas that require attention to inform measures for tranche 2 of early release of prisoners in October 2024.

In budgetary terms, it must be recognised that these individuals would have been released anyway, the change to SDS brings that release date forward. The numbers now cited for Birmingham are relatively low as a proportion of overall service demands.

CITY COUNCIL – 17 SEPTEMBER 2024

WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS FROM COUNCILLOR BRUCE LINES

“Gas and Electric Safety Certificates”

Question:

How many council properties don't have a a) gas safety certificate from within the last 12 months and b) an electrical safety certificate from within the last 5 years

Answer:

Based on current records, there are 60 households who have an overdue gas safety check. We are 99.87% compliant around gas safety. Based on current records, there are 60 households who have an overdue gas safety check. We are 99.87% compliant around gas safety.

Electrical safety is an area of challenge, and this was picked up in the regulatory breach notice issued in May 2023. The service has improved the electrical safety position, reporting compliance of 86.76%, with 7720 households overdue an electrical safety check.

This is an increase of just over 30% since May 2023. Electrical safety is an area whereby the Council are implementing certificates into a new software system to assure ourselves on the data we hold. Until the implementation is completed, we cannot be fully assured on the data we hold in relation to electrical safety and intend to have this process finalised by December 2024.

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CITY COUNCIL – 17 SEPTEMBER 2024

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING AND
HOMELESSNESS FROM COUNCILLOR DARIUS SANDHU**

“Perry Barr Village Estate Agency costs”

Question:

On 25 August 2023, the Council entered into a £400,000 contract with Connells Estate Agents for the disposal of properties on Plot 9 of Perry Barr Village, how much of this has been paid and how much is still owed to Connells, now that the council has decided to appropriate Plot 9 into the HRA?

Answer:

The Council has not paid any monies to Connells for this contract, and the contract has now been terminated.

CITY COUNCIL – 17 SEPTEMBER 2024

WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS FROM COUNCILLOR DEIRDRE ALDEN

“Perry Barr Village contracts”

Question:

Please list details of all contracts the council has entered into for estate agency or housing management services (e.g. management of sinking funds and repairs) for the Perry Barr Regeneration Scheme, including start and end date of the contract, total value, total paid to date, total still owed, purpose and current status (i.e. if still needed given changes to the disposal plans for the site)?

Answer:

The Council has entered into the following contracts for estate agency services:

Connells Estate Agents were instructed to sell homes as part of the Government's First Homes Pilot. The contract commenced in Sept 2023 and has now ended and the Council has not incurred any cost as part of this contract.

Avison Young have been appointed as the sales and marketing consultants for the sale of the plots on the residential development. including both the developed and undeveloped plots. The contract commenced in June 2020 and continues until the scheme is sold.

The Council has entered into a contract with Acivico Group to provide facilities management services to maintain the developed plots and ensure all appropriate maintenance services are provided. At the point the developed plots are disposed of, the services of Acivico will no longer be required.

Due to the commercially sensitive nature of the contractual appointments, financial information cannot be provided.

H9

CITY COUNCIL – 17 SEPTEMBER 2024

**PLEASE NOTE WRITTEN QUESTION H9 - HAS NOW BEEN
REDIRECTED TO F24 – CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE**

CITY COUNCIL – 17 SEPTEMBER 2024

WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS FROM COUNCILLOR EWAN MACKEY

“Prisoner Release scheme”

Question:

How many prisoners released under the government’s early release scheme, has the government informed the council will be housed in Birmingham and will any council properties be used for this purpose?

Answer:

On 5 September 2024, the Regional Probation Director for the West Midlands, wrote to Local Authorities in the region to update on the early release programme. Government approved a Statutory Instrument to reduce the time those sentenced to eligible Standard Determinate Sentences (SDS) serve in prison from 50% to 40% of that sentence (SDS40 for shorthand).

The retrospective changes will have two commencement dates for two tranches - SDS40 applies to those serving eligible sentences under 5 years from 10 September 2024 (tranche 1) and will apply to other eligible prisoners (5 years or more) from 22 October 2024 (tranche 2). A proportion of these prisoners will be due for immediate release on the two commencement dates.

The table below was included setting out the numbers expected for the two tranches related to Birmingham. In total 106 individuals are recorded for Birmingham, while 27 of those are included under Solihull as well.

Probation region	PDU	Police force area	Local Authority area	Total number of expected tranche 1 prison releases	Total number of expected tranche 2 prison releases
West Midlands Region	Birmingham Central and South	West Midlands	Birmingham	20	36
West Midlands Region	Birmingham Courts and Centralised Functions	West Midlands	Birmingham	12	11

West Midlands Region	Birmingham North, East and Solihull	West Midlands	Solihull Birmingham West Midlands	11	16
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These figures do not guarantee that those individuals will be housed in Birmingham. At the same time, Birmingham cannot be assured that individuals released in other areas will not be accommodated in Birmingham.

There may be Birmingham City Council tenants being released and returning to their homes and there may be household members of Birmingham City Council tenants who will occupy Council housing in Birmingham. There is no plan to specifically use Council homes for the accommodation of individuals released through this scheme.

H11

CITY COUNCIL – 17 SEPTEMBER 2024

WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS FROM COUNCILLOR ADAM HIGGS

“Housing maintenance changes”

Question:

What changes have been made to maintenance standards in council housing communal areas (e.g. cleaning, grass cutting etc.) in the last 4 years?

Answer:

There have been no changes to maintenance standards in council housing communal areas in the last 4 years.

CITY COUNCIL – 17 SEPTEMBER 2024

WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS FROM COUNCILLOR DAVID PEARS

“Housing charges”

Question:

What assessment has been made of the fees and charges for council tenants to account for any reductions in service levels (e.g. maintenance standards) in the last 4 years?

Answer:

Service Charges to Social Housing tenants are set annually at the start of the year based on the budget set for resources and services which are chargeable. This means that annually they are reviewed, and tenants charged according to the increases or decreases of resources allocated to each applicable area.

However, in relation to the example in the question, revenue maintenance and capital stock condition improvement works are not service chargeable, they are funded directly from the annual rental income received by the HRA. These rent levels are set annually by Cabinet but are capped by government policy. The government's rent policy aimed for an annual cap to increases from prior year's rent equivalent to CPI plus 1%. They have, however, set lower caps in several years to mitigate the impact on tenants' income. These limits have led to the HRA having limited resources to invest in all the areas we would want to regarding our existing and planned new stock.

CITY COUNCIL – 17 SEPTEMBER 2024

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE,
COMMUNITY SAFETY, AND EQUALITIES FROM COUNCILLOR ROBERT
ALDEN**

“ASB Ombudsman Findings”

Question:

Following the Ombudsman's findings in Case Ref 22 011 865 concerning failure of the council to adequately inform residents about the community trigger process for ASB, what changes has the council made to its literature and its template responses to residents? Please provide a copy of these

Answer:

There have been several changes made to ensure that residents of Birmingham know their rights to request an ASB case review (previously known as Community Trigger) and how to do this. The Community Safety team worked with the nationally recognised ASB organisation Resolve during last year's ASB awareness week, where the focus was specifically on the ASB case reviews and informing residents of their rights. The week long campaign consisted of a range of webinars, stalls, community events and literature being distributed to empower residents on the ASB case review tool.

1. All relevant information can be found on the BCC website, this explains how to make a request, the process and the criteria. This can all be found via the following link - https://www.birmingham.gov.uk/info/20095/antisocial_behaviour_and_neighbour_disputes/1912/anti-social_behaviour_case_review
2. The attached has also been posted on the Birmingham Community Safety Partnership website - <https://www.birmingham-community-safety-partnership.co.uk/get-help/crime-and-anti-social-behaviour/#>
3. Leaflets that have been developed (please see attached), have been provided to our community safety intervention officers to disseminate and have also been placed at some local hubs around Birmingham, including council buildings, libraries and leisure centres. These leaflets have been shared with partners to build their knowledge on the ASB Case Review's so that residents can be advised or referred to the community safety team.
4. ASB Case Reviews will also have a session on this year's ASB week and is regularly discussed at Local Community Safety Partnerships with local professionals.

CITY COUNCIL – 17 SEPTEMBER 2024

WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE, COMMUNITY SAFETY, AND EQUALITIES FROM COUNCILLOR EWAN MACKEY

“ASB council motion”

Question:

In February 2023, a motion of Full Council on ASB agreed to ask the Executive to: -

- **take steps to ensure residents are aware of their statutory right to request a community trigger where ASB issues cannot be resolved,**
- **explore options to reinstate the concierge service,**
- **support the implementation of public space protection orders, and**
- **to use ASB data as an additional criteria in the selection of wards for selective licensing.**

Please outline what specific action has been taken against each of these in the last 18 months?

Answer:

- **take steps to ensure residents are aware of their statutory right to request a community trigger where ASB issues cannot be resolved**

The council's community safety team have taken multiple steps to ensure residents of Birmingham are aware of their statutory right to request a ASB Case Review (formerly known as Community Trigger). The team worked with the nationally recognised ASB organisation Resolve during last year's ASB awareness week, where the focus was specifically on the ASB case reviews and informing residents of their rights. The week long campaign consisted of a range of webinars, stalls, community events and literature being distributed to empower residents on the ASB case review tool. All relevant information can be found on the BCC website.

- **explore options to reinstate the concierge service**

BCC housing has explored options to reinstate the concierge service, however, currently there are no plans to re-instate the service back into housing blocks. BCC housing has

cabinet approval to install monitored CCTV into blocks with a monitored level of support and this programme has started.

- **support the implementation of public space protection orders**

The council continues to support the implementation of Public Space Protection Orders (PSPO) across the city where there is evidence of need. We have introduced two new PSPO's within this year, namely the Soho, Lozells & East Handsworth PSPO and Kings Heath & Moseley PSPO which is due to be finalised imminently. The Community Safety Team are also in the process of reviewing the City Centre and Erdington PSPOs which are coming up for renewal in January 2025.

As part of the review of the City Centre PSPO will be seeking commence consultation (subject to Cabinet Member approval) with the public and interested organisations to seek views, on including additional conditions in areas across the City to prevent other forms of anti social behaviour, such as aggressive begging, street trading, highway obstruction and cycling in high pedestrian areas.

A list of the current PSPO's can be found here along with documentation - [Public space protection orders | Birmingham City Council](#)

- **to use ASB data as an additional criteria in the selection of wards for selective licensing.**

The current selective licensing designation was approved by DLUHC (now MHCLG) and the then Secretary of State on the 5 September 2022 for implementation on the 5 June 2023. Following the motion at Full Council in February 2023 as it was not possible to change the current designation, it was agreed that once it had been operating for a sufficient period we would review its effectiveness and decide on future activity. This review has now taken place and was presented to Licensing and Public Protection Committee on the 11 September before seeking approval from the Cabinet Member for Housing for it to be sent to MHCLG. As the review of the current designation was positive, over the next 12 months we will use a range of data sets (including ASB) which are relevant to making a designation, and have become available since the original designation, to identify if evidence exists to pursue any further designations.

CITY COUNCIL – 17 SEPTEMBER 2024

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE,
COMMUNITY SAFETY, AND EQUALITIES FROM COUNCILLOR DEBBIE
CLANCY**

“Prisoner Release”

Question:

What assessment has been made of the impact on domestic abuse survivors in Birmingham of the government’s prisoner early release programme, and what actions have been put in place, and representations made to government, to mitigate this?

Answer:

The early release of offenders in prison for domestic abuse connected crimes is excluded. This will include:

- *stalking offences*
- *controlling or coercive behaviours in an intimate or family relationship*
- *non-fatal strangulation and suffocation*
- *breach of restraining order, non-molestation order, and domestic abuse protection order*

However, not all prisoners will have domestic abuse as their “index crime” and may have been released early for another crime.

To mitigate any impact:

- The Children’s Trust have been working closely with Probation to identify and manage any risks to victims
- The Domestic Abuse Board discussed the scheme and mitigations on the 11th September 2024 with key partners across the city
- License conditions will be in place for all offenders released under the scheme,
- Birmingham and Solihull Women’s Aid, who run our commissioned Domestic Abuse Hub, are ready to support any survivors who are impacted or worried by the scheme and information to those experiencing abuse and where to get help has been shared and reinforced

The Birmingham Community Safety Partnership’s Reducing Offending Board is meeting on 19 September 2024. A key focus of the meeting will be to identify any lessons learnt from

tranche 1 in terms of what worked well and any areas that require attention to inform measures for tranche 2 of early release of prisoners in October 2024.

CITY COUNCIL – 17 SEPTEMBER 2024

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSFORMATION,
GOVERNANCE AND HR FROM COUNCILLOR ALEX YIP**

“DBS Checking”

Question:

In response to very serious safeguarding concerns within the Home to School Transport Service, and the damning Weightmans report that followed, a commitment was made by the previous portfolio holder for HR to bring the DBS checking service back in-house. Please confirm on what date this vital and urgent action was completed following that commitment over 3 years ago?

Answer:

The corporate DBS checks are run in accordance with requirements of the role. All staff within BCC whose role requires either a Basic, Standard or Enhanced check are facilitated via our third-party provider Security Watchdog. As additional assurance any staff who require a Standard or Enhanced check are also required to register for an annual update service.

In CYPTS service contracts between BCC and its Service Providers have been strengthened and each of our Providers are contractually obligated to provide workers with the correct level of DBS when working within Regulated Activity, this being an enhanced DBS check using the Adult and Child workforce with both Adults and Childs barred lists checked. Workers are required to sign up to the DBS Update Service, enabling their employer and/or BCC to conduct checks on the status of the DBS.

For workers where their DBS shows information with convictions and/or cautions, a Dedicated Safeguarding DBS Panel was introduced at BCC with representatives from Safeguarding (DSL) and Compliance team as Panel members.

Each applicant will have to undergo a risk assessment during the Panel process, based on the information provided to deem their suitability to work on CYPTS.

Databases have been created to monitor and maintain comprehensive records of all Service Providers worker details and approval statuses.

CITY COUNCIL – 17 SEPTEMBER 2024

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSFORMATION,
GOVERNANCE AND HR FROM COUNCILLOR DEBBIE CLANCY****“Gifts and Hospitality”****Question:**

Please list all gifts and hospitality declared by a) officers and b) members received from any of the three housing repairs contractors (Fortem, Wates, Equans) since 2016, including the estimated value of these

Answer:**Members:**

Councillor	Date	Company	Gift/Hospitality	Amount	Reason for accepting
Jayne Francis	25 June 2024	Equans	Dinner	£50.00	Attending as Cabinet Member Equans are BCC contractor who do the repairs and maintenance on all the council houses. It was a wider event, which took place while they were at Housing Conference 2024.
Roger Harmer	28 June 2022	Wates Group	Dinner	Unknown	To participate in discussion about regeneration

Officers:

Officer	Date	Company	Gift/Hospitality	Amount	Reason for accepting
Phil Ross and others within Asset Management	18 February 2022	Equans	Attendance at National Energy Efficiency Awards Evening - Equans are nominated for an award for works carried out in Birmingham and have asked their client to attend	Unknown	Requested by line manager and promotes Birmingham's investment in major projects and energy saving at National Awards

Thomas Jewkes	08 March 2022	Equans	They provided snacks, tea/coffee and paid for lunch with a drink	£27.00 (estimated)	This was a council meeting to allow the council to discuss, or to continue to discuss, business with an organisation for the East contract next year. This was by invitation.
Wayne Davies, Asset Management Dewan Pervez Choudhury Nick Thomas	12 June 2024	Equans	ASCP Award Event - Equans submission was specifically around the Equans/Birmingham City Council Contract and concentrated on the following topics: Retrofit & Keeping residents safe and warm, Exceptional safety, Happy residents and less complaints & Superior gas compliance.	£1,401.00	Contractor support and recognition.
Darren Beazley, Senior Service Manager	25 June 2024	Fortem	Hospitality of Food & Drinks offered as part of Housing 2024 in Manchester.	£90.00	This hospitality has been declined by Darren Beazley.
Paul Langford	25 June 2024	Equans	Dinner	£50.00	Networking conference for BCC and attended with Cllr Jayne Francis. Equans are BCC contractor who do the repairs and maintenance on all the council houses. It was a wider event, which took place while they were at Housing Conference 2024.

CITY COUNCIL – 17 SEPTEMBER 2024

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSFORMATION,
GOVERNANCE AND HR FROM COUNCILLOR DARIUS SANDHU**

“Delegated Decisions”

Question:

How many officer delegated decisions were taken in each month since May 2022, and how many of these were published online. Broken down by department

Answer:

Unfortunately, given the time available, it has not been possible to respond fully to this question as the records are not all held centrally.

The need for greater accessibility and transparency to decision making, at all levels, is fully recognised. This is set out in detail via the Governance and Decision Making Workstream of the Council's Improvement and Recovery Plan. This sets out work to update the Officer Scheme of Delegations, which will also look at ways to increase the visibility of decisions, taken by officers under delegated powers.

Such decisions can be found via [CMIS > Committee > Executive > Chief Officer](#)

CITY COUNCIL – 17 SEPTEMBER 2024

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSFORMATION,
GOVERNANCE AND HR FROM COUNCILLOR RON STORER**

“Job Evaluation”

Question:

Please provide the latest position on the job evaluation programme, including current forecast date the new scheme will be in place, the total number of roles to be evaluated, the number evaluated to date, the number of evaluations challenged by trade unions

Answer:

The Equal Pay programme is still working towards 1 April 2025, and holding the dates committed for the delivery of the overall programme as set out in the Addendum agreed in October 2023. The total number of agreed benchmark roles is c.200 (including Birmingham Children’s Trust and Schools) and the job information phase of the programme is working on getting these agreed and evaluated.

As of 10 September 2024, a total of 52 evaluations have been completed and a large proportion of the remaining roles are on schedule for evaluation. These evaluations are needed to validate the proposed pay and grading models that will accompany the job evaluation process. In time, all job roles in BCC will be re-evaluated. The number of evaluations challenged will crystallise during the moderation process with the Trade Unions as agreed as part of the process.

CITY COUNCIL – 17 SEPTEMBER 2024

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSFORMATION,
GOVERNANCE AND HR FROM COUNCILLOR DAVID PEARS**

“Job Evaluation milestones”

Question:

The milestone for evaluating benchmarked roles for the Equal Pay Programme was set as 31 May 2024, a milestone members were told was on track in February. An all-staff email has now confirmed a new deadline of 30 September - 4 months late - please provide a copy of all other milestones within the programme and an update on delivery against each of these

Answer:

The Equal Pay programme is working towards a new job evaluation and pay and grading structure to be in place for 1 April 2025, as was agreed in the Addendum of October 2023.

The delay to benchmark role evaluation was reported at April's Equal Pay Board which triggered the programme's change control protocols. Mitigation options were developed and presented to the Board, who gave programme direction to proceed with the new baselined plan on the basis that it is still on track to deliver the overall programme requirements by April 2025. The updated process and milestones have been agreed with the Equal Pay Board, together with all mitigations to ensure that the programme's objectives are delivered. There are no other programme slippages currently being reported.

CITY COUNCIL – 17 SEPTEMBER 2024

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSFORMATION,
GOVERNANCE AND HR FROM COUNCILLOR CLIFTON WELCH**

“Childcare vouchers”

Question:

What was the 'problem in the finance and logistics chain' that meant this month, for the second time in less than a year, staff were not paid childcare vouchers on time?

Answer:

The problem being described is due to a manual intervention that is required to ensure payment. Every month two invoices are received by the organisation for Childcare Vouchers that have to be sent on to accounts payable. These have to be processed individually. One invoice is for the childcare voucher order value (which is VAT exempt), and the other invoice is for the service provider fees associated with that order which includes VAT.

In August, our childcare voucher provider told us that they had not received payment for the childcare voucher order. It seems that the manual process had failed, and only one of the two invoices had been sent for payment and marked as 'goods received' this was human error and was immediately corrected when noticed.

We ensured that this was credited to accounts for those impacted by 30th August 2024. Further compliance checks will not be added to the manual process to limit any further risk of reoccurrence.

CITY COUNCIL – 17 SEPTEMBER 2024

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSFORMATION,
GOVERNANCE AND HR FROM COUNCILLOR GARETH MOORE**

“Job Evaluation budget”

Question:

Please provide the latest position on the budget for the equal pay/job evaluation programme, including total approved budget, total spend to date, current forecast spend.

Answer:

Approved Equal Pay budget Financial Year (FY) 24/25:	£13.3m
Spend to date:	£2.7m
Current forecasted spend 24/25:	£12.62m

This leaves a contingency of circa £700k against allocated budget.

Actual spend to date is less than anticipated, however we have now had approval to recruit additional roles to facilitate the New Pay & Grading structure, stabilisation of HR data within the Oracle system and contract implementation for this financial year.

Mercer has now been engaged to provide independent modelling and benchmarking salaries against the rest of West Midlands for our NJC colleagues. No costs have been incurred yet due to contract sign off being delayed whilst clarifying legal questions. The cost of providing this service is included in the forecast for the remainder of the financial year.

Approval has also been initially approved for work to begin on JNC Pay & Grading. This is currently ready to go out to tender under Procurement. We anticipate these costs to fall within this financial year.

CITY COUNCIL – 17 SEPTEMBER 2024

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSFORMATION,
GOVERNANCE AND HR FROM COUNCILLOR DAVID PEARS**

“Apprenticeship Levy”

Question:

Since April 2017, in each year how much unspent Apprenticeship Levy has been returned (or is due to be returned) to the Treasury?

Answer:

As a Council we have returned £9.4m in total of the Apprenticeship Levy from 2017 to date.

We have been mitigating this by:

- Building an Early Careers team to develop and deliver a strategy for Apprenticeships
- Procuring trusted provider contracts to go out to our Schools for promotion of the levy to support new entrants for growth and upskilling along with Directorate career pathways.
- Offering upskilling opportunities to colleagues for key skills and gaps that we require as a business. For example: Leadership, Project Management and Data Analysis Apprenticeships to grow competencies internally.
- Launched our ‘Levy Transfer Scheme’ in 2023 to support our SME businesses within the surrounding area. Supported fully funded apprenticeships for 107 SME businesses, 336 apprentice candidates across 57 different career pathways. Totalling 2.84m planned spend. April 2024 we can transfer up to 50% of our levies to support our region.

K1

CITY COUNCIL – 17 SEPTEMBER 2024

**PLEASE NOTE WRITTEN QUESTION K1 - HAS NOW BEEN
REDIRECTED TO B10 – DEPUTY LEADER**

K2

CITY COUNCIL – 17 SEPTEMBER 2024

**PLEASE NOTE WRITTEN QUESTION K2 - HAS NOW BEEN
REDIRECTED TO B11 – DEPUTY LEADER**

K3

CITY COUNCIL – 17 SEPTEMBER 2024

**PLEASE NOTE WRITTEN QUESTION K3 - HAS NOW BEEN
REDIRECTED TO B12 – DEPUTY LEADER**

K4

CITY COUNCIL – 17 SEPTEMBER 2024

**PLEASE NOTE WRITTEN QUESTION K4 - HAS NOW BEEN
REDIRECTED TO B13 – DEPUTY LEADER**

K5

CITY COUNCIL – 17 SEPTEMBER 2024

**PLEASE NOTE WRITTEN QUESTION K5 - HAS NOW BEEN
REDIRECTED TO B14 – DEPUTY LEADER**

OFFICIAL

Birmingham City Council

Report to Full Council

5 November 2024



Title:	UPDATE ON PROPORTIONALITY CALCULATIONS
Lead Member:	Not Applicable
Relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee:	Not Applicable
Has this report been shared with the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee Chair?	Not Applicable
Report Author:	Christian Scade Head of Scrutiny and Committee Services, Legal and Governance 07517 550013 Christian.Scade@birmingham.gov.uk
Authorised by:	Marie Rosenthal Interim City Solicitor and Monitoring Officer
Is this a Key Decision?	Not Applicable
Reason(s) why not included on the Forward Plan and confirm who has authorised it to be considered:	Not Applicable
Is this a Late Report?	No
Reason(s) why Late and confirm who has authorised it to be considered:	Not Applicable
Is this decision eligible for 'call in?'	Not Applicable
If 'call-in' has been dis-applied, please provide reason(s) and confirm who has authorised:	Not Applicable
Wards:	All
Does this report contain exempt or confidential information?	No

1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 To consider how Councillor Shabina Bano's decision to join the Liberal Democrat political group affects the political proportionality rules introduced by the Local Government and Housing Act 1989.

2 COMMISSIONERS' REVIEW

- 2.1 Commissioners approve recommendations.

3 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 That the updated proportionality calculations, including changes to aggregate entitlement, set out in **Appendix 1**, be noted.
- 3.2 That the appointments made to committees on 21 May 2024, updated by Full Council on 18 June 2024, 9 July 2024 and 17 September 2024, set out in **Appendix 2**, be noted.
- 3.3 That, in view of the changes to aggregate entitlement, the following amendment to committee appointments be made: Labour to give up a seat to the Liberal Democrats on Licensing and Public Protection Committee.

4 KEY INFORMATION

Context

- 4.1 Following Councillor Shabina Bano's decision to join the Liberal Democrat political group, the Council is obliged to review the representation of political groups on the Committees which it appoints.
- 4.2 The Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) Regulations 1990 highlights that a political group shall be treated as constituted when there is delivered to the proper officer a notice in writing.
- 4.3 As of 28 October 2024, the date of Full Council agenda despatch, the overall political balance of the Council is set out in the table below and is based on the 101 Members currently in office. The information **in red / brackets** highlights the position at the 9 July 2024 Council meeting, when proportionality calculations were last updated.
- 4.4 For clarity, other than Councillor Shabina Bano joining the Liberal Democrat political group, the proper officer has not been made aware in writing of any other changes to political group memberships.

Party Group	Seats on the Council	Percentage	Aggregate Entitlement	Change in Aggregate Entitlement since July
Labour	64 (65)	63.366% (64.356%)	71 (72)	-1
Conservatives	22 (22)	21.782% (21.782%)	25 (25)	0
Lib Dems	13 (12)	12.871% (11.881%)	14 (13)	+1
Greens	2 (2)	1.980% (1.989%)	2 (2)	0
Total	101 (101)	100% (100%)	112 (112)	N/A

4.5 The implications of Councillor Shabina Bano joining the Liberal Democrat political group has had the following impact on the aggregate entitlement:

- Labour now have an aggregate entitlement of 71, rather than 72, seats.
- The Lib Dems now have an aggregate entitlement of 14, rather than 13, seats.
- The Conservatives aggregate entitlement, of 25 seats, remains the same.
- The Greens aggregate entitlement, of 2 seats, remains the same.

4.6 As a result, the following adjustment now needs to be made: Labour need to give up one seat to the Liberal Democrats on Licensing and Public Protection Committee. This is the seat Labour had gained from the Liberal Democrats in July 2024.

5 IMPACT AND IMPLICATIONS

Finance and Best Value

5.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

Legal

5.2 By law, seats on committees must be allocated in proportion to the political composition of the Council. An authority can only decide that it wishes to adopt an arrangement other than a proportional one if no Member votes against it. This is known as a “nem con” vote.

5.3 The Local Government and Housing Act 1989 requires that as far as reasonably practicable, the following principles must be adhered to when determining the allocation of seats on committees to political groups:

- (a) The seats on a committee cannot be allocated to members of one political group.
- (b) The largest group on the council must be allocated the majority of seats on any committee.
- (c) Subject to (a) and (b) the total number of committee seats allocated to each political group must reflect the proportion of total members of the authority from each political group.
- (d) Subject to (a) to (c) above, the number of the seats on a committee which are allocated to each political group bears the same proportion to the number of all the seats on the committee as is borne by the number of members of that group to the membership of the authority.

5.4 The Local Government and Housing Act 1989 requires local authorities to review committee membership and political representation annually and when notice is received of a change in the size of the political groups.

5.5 In determining the allocation of seats on ordinary committees, the proportion that each political group forms of the total membership of the Council is applied to the total number of elected Member seats on each committee.

5.6 Generally, fractional entitlements of less than one half are rounded down and entitlements of one half or more are rounded up. So that this process of rounding does not result in advantage to one political group, the aggregate membership of all the ordinary committees must also be in line with the proportions on the Council.

Equalities

5.7 There are no direct equalities implications arising from this report.

6 APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Updated Proportionality Calculations

Appendix 2 – City Council Appointments – updated 17 September 2024

7 BACKGROUND PAPERS

None.

Table 1: Allocation of Committee Seats 28 October 2024

<u>Party Group</u>	<u>Seats on Council</u>	<u>%age</u>
Labour	64	63.366%
Conservative	22	21.782%
Liberal Democrat	13	12.871%
Green	2	1.980%
Total	101	100.00%

Committee Seats	Labour		Conservative		Liberal Democrat		Green	
3	2	(1.901)	1	(0.653)	0	(0.386)	0	(0.059)
4	3	(2.535)	1	(0.871)	0	(0.515)	0	(0.079)
5	3	(3.168)	1	(1.089)	1	(0.644)	0	(0.099)
6	4	(3.802)	1	(1.307)	1	(0.772)	0	(0.119)
7	4	(4.436)	2	(1.525)	1	(0.901)	0	(0.139)
8	5	(5.069)	2	(1.743)	1	(1.030)	0	(0.158)
9	6	(5.703)	2	(1.960)	1	(1.158)	0	(0.178)
10	7	(6.337)	2	(2.178)	1	(1.287)	0	(0.198)
11	7	(6.970)	3	(2.396)	1	(1.416)	0	(0.218)
12	8	(7.604)	3	(2.614)	1	(1.545)	0	(0.238)
13	8	(8.238)	3	(2.832)	2	(1.673)	0	(0.257)
14	9	(8.871)	3	(3.050)	2	(1.802)	0	(0.277)
15	10	(9.505)	3	(3.267)	2	(1.931)	0	(0.297)
16	10	(10.139)	4	(3.485)	2	(2.059)	0	(0.317)
17	11	(10.772)	4	(3.703)	2	(2.188)	0	(0.337)
18	12	(11.406)	4	(3.921)	2	(2.317)	0	(0.356)
19	12	(12.040)	4	(4.139)	2	(2.446)	1	(0.376)
20	13	(12.673)	5	(4.356)	2	(2.574)	0	(0.396)
21	14	(13.307)	5	(4.574)	2	(2.703)	0	(0.416)
22	14	(13.941)	5	(4.792)	3	(2.832)	0	(0.436)
23	15	(14.574)	5	(5.010)	3	(2.960)	0	(0.455)
24	16	(15.208)	5	(5.228)	3	(3.089)	0	(0.475)
25	16	(15.842)	6	(5.446)	3	(3.218)	0	(0.495)
26	17	(16.475)	6	(5.663)	3	(3.347)	0	(0.515)
27	17	(17.109)	6	(5.881)	3	(3.475)	1	(0.535)
28	18	(17.743)	6	(6.099)	3	(3.604)	1	(0.554)
29	19	(18.376)	6	(6.317)	3	(3.733)	1	(0.574)
30	19	(19.010)	6	(6.535)	4	(3.861)	1	(0.594)

(N.B - 1 - 30 figures do not take into account aggregate proportionality)

Table 2: Aggregate Proportionality as of 28 October 2024

Aggregate Proportionality:					
No of Cllrs:	Lab	Con	Lib Dem	Green	
101	64	22	13	2	
Proportionality - %	63.366%	21.782%	12.871%	1.980%	
No of Committee seats:					
112	70.97	24.40	14.42	2.22	
Aggregate entitlement:	71	25	14	2	112
Seats allocated:	71	27	14	0	112
Gains / Losses:	0	-2	0	2	
Committees at AM					
Corporate & Finance O&S	11	(8 Councillors each)			
O&S Comms (x 6):	48				
Planning Comm :	15				
Licensing Public Prot Comm	15				
Employment	7				
Trusts&Charities Comm	8				
Audit Comm:	8				
Total seats:	112	(CBMC and Standards outside proportionality)			
Seats allocated:	Lab	Con	LibDem	X-check	
Corporate & Finance O&S	7	3	1	11	
O&S Comms (x 6):	30	12	6	48	
Planning Comm :	10	3	2	15	
Licensing Public Prot Comm	10	3	2	15	
Employment	4	2	1	7	
Trusts&Charities Comm	5	2	1	8	
Audit Comm:	5	2	1	8	
Total seats:	71	27	14	112	

Birmingham City Council

Report to Full Council

5 November 2024



Title:	WEST MIDLANDS COMBINED AUTHORITY SCRUTINY AND AUDIT ANNUAL REPORT 2023/24
Lead Member:	Councillor John Cotton, Leader of the Council
Relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee:	Not applicable
Has this report been shared with the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee Chair?	Not applicable
Report Author:	James Hughes West Midlands Combined Authority
Authorised by:	Marie Rosenthal, Interim City Solicitor and Monitoring Officer
Is this a Key Decision?	No
Reason(s) why not included on the Forward Plan and confirm who has authorised it to be considered:	Not applicable
Is this a Late Report?	No
Reason(s) why Late and confirm who has authorised it to be considered:	Not applicable
Is this decision eligible for 'call in'?	Not applicable
If 'call-in' has been dis-applied, please provide reason(s) and confirm who has authorised:	Not applicable
Wards:	Not applicable

1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 Appendix 1 to this report is the West Midlands Combined Authority Scrutiny and Audit Annual Report for 2023/24.

2 COMMISSIONERS' REVIEW

- 2.1 This report has been produced by an external, partner organisation and so is not subject to Commissioner review.

3 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 That City Council notes the report as set out at Appendix 1.

4 MEMBER ENGAGEMENT

Ward Councillor(s)

- 4.1 Not applicable.

Overview and Scrutiny

- 4.2 Not applicable.

Other

- 4.3 Not applicable

5 IMPACT AND IMPLICATIONS

Finance and Best Value

- 5.1 There are no financial implications as a result of the recommendation in this report.

Legal

- 5.2 There are no legal implications as a result of the recommendation in this report.

Equalities

- 5.3 There are no equalities implications as a result of the recommendation in this report.

Procurement

- 5.4 There are no procurement implications as a result of the recommendation in this report.

People Services

- 5.5 There are no people services implications as a result of the recommendation in this report.

Climate Change, Nature and Net Zero

- 5.6 There are no climate change, nature or net zero implications as a result of the recommendation in this report.

Corporate Parenting

- 5.7 There are no corporate parenting implications as a result of the recommendation in this report.

Other

- 5.8 There are no other implications as a result of the recommendation in this report.

6 APPENDICES

- 6.1 Appendix 1 – West Midlands Combined Authority Scrutiny and Audit Annual Report for 2023/24.

7 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 7.1 None.

West Midlands Combined Authority Scrutiny and Audit Annual Report

2023/24



West Midlands
Combined Authority



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Forewords



Councillor Cathy Bayton

Chair of Overview & Scrutiny Committee

I write this foreword as the outgoing Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, a position I have proudly held for the last three years and have guided the scrutiny committee through the many challenges of the Deeper Devolution Deal and the Government's new Scrutiny Protocol. The committee has risen to the challenge this year, and I want to pay tribute to every member of the committee for their dedication and contributions, particularly my Vice-Chair Councillor Naeem Akhtar for his ongoing support and leading the Brownfield Land Remediation Deep Dive Review.

As always, the committee would not function without the support of Governance Service Officers, Dan Essex and Julia Cleary, but particularly Lyndsey Roberts who ensures that the committee has the information it needs and supports me as Chair to keep the meeting running smoothly. Lyndsey Roberts has helped the committee develop over the years and will continue to be an invaluable source of support to the new committee. It has also been very helpful to always have a member of the senior leadership team present at meetings and this has increased accountability.

In the annual report the work schedule has been outlined, the outcomes and future focus points demonstrate the forward thinking of the committee and the impact of the WMCA's policies on its strategic aims and objectives. During this year, scrutiny has been given a higher profile at the WMCA Board in the presentation of its reports where all scrutiny recommendations are now included and considered by the board.

In March we received a confirmation letter from Rt Hon Michael Gove MP that the WMCA would be eligible for the Level 4 Devolution Deal, achieved in part due to the level of work scrutiny had undertaken and the improvements made.

As scrutiny chairs, Councillor John McNicholas and I have attended five of the constituent authorities' Overview & Scrutiny Committees during the year, to increase elected members knowledge and involvement in the WMCA, which has been well received. We still have some thinking to do around public participation in scrutiny sessions and how we can increase this.

I have continued to chair the national Combined Authorities Scrutiny Chairs' Forum where much discussion has taken place around the new scrutiny protocol and the strengthened accountability and responsibility. The West Midlands is in a good place to continue to grow in the new Mayoral term. I wish the committee well for the coming year and the new challenges it will face.



Councillor John McNicholas

Chair of Transport Delivery Overview & Scrutiny Committee

I have had the privilege of being appointed as Chair of the newly formed Transport Delivery Overview & Scrutiny Committee for 2023/24, and I would like to take this opportunity to thank my Vice-Chair, Councillor Mary Locke and all members of the committee for their constructive contributions throughout the year. I would also like to thank the chairs of the Member Engagement Groups for the in-depth scrutiny work they have done throughout the year.

I would like to acknowledge non-constituent members appointed to the committee for their participation and valued contributions as members of rural communities and thank Dan Essex and Lyndsey Roberts for their tireless help, advice and patience. The committee has welcomed James Hughes as the newly appointed Member Relationships Manager and look forward to working with him next year.

As you will read in this Annual Report, it has been a very busy year setting up and delivering our extensive work programme, which justifies the WMCA Board's decision to create a new scrutiny committee solely focused on the WMCA public transport responsibilities.

As you would expect, much happens behind the scenes and we have continued to hold meetings of the scrutiny chairs and vice-chairs of all the combined authorities across England. This has helped share good practice and ideas for how we can all strengthen and improve our scrutiny functions.

Transport Delivery Overview & Scrutiny Committee has experienced issues with quoracy this year, so we are continuing to engage with council leaders on the importance of member attendance to ensure that individual districts are not disenfranchised in the development of transport in the West Midlands. It is vitally important when local authorities nominate members to sit on our committees that those individuals have the capacity to commit to the varied and interesting work programme for the year.

I would like to congratulate the newly elected Mayor of the West Midlands, Richard Parker and we look forward to the Mayor's proposals regarding bus franchising, which will be a focus of the committee's work programme in the forthcoming year.

Finally, as a result of me being in the same political party as the Mayor, the WMCA's constitution now requires me to stand down as chair of the Transport Delivery Overview & Scrutiny Committee, and a new Chair will be appointed at our AGM. I have enjoyed my time as Chair immensely, having been appointed by the region's political leaders, and I look forward to continuing to be involved in transport matters this year.



Mark Smith

Chair of Audit, Risk & Assurance Committee

It has been my pleasure to be the Independent Chair of the Audit, Risk and Assurance Committee since October 2021. During that time I have been fortunate to be supported in my role by the Vice Chair Councillor Ram Lakha who has continued to provide wise counsel.

The Committee has formally met on five occasions during the course of the year and continued to provide oversight of the WMCA's Risk Management process and the Single Assurance Framework which I am pleased to note has now been rolled out to all the Directorates. Further Assurance has been provided through a range of specific audits undertaken by the Internal Audit function. In previous years this service was outsourced to the

City of Wolverhampton Council, but in 2023 -24, it was concluded that it would be more efficient and effective to bring in house, and I am pleased to note that we have ended the year with a new Head of Internal Audit and Information Governance and have built a team to support this work going forward.

The Committee also oversees the relationship with the External Auditors. There are a number of well publicised challenges in the provision of external audit services to public sector bodies and in particular the timely completion of the work, and WMCA has not been immune to this. We will continue to work with the auditors to do whatever we can to try and ensure that the annual accounts are approved on a more timely basis in the future.

The Committee continues to get excellent support from a wide range of officers, but I would particularly like to thank Wendy Slater for all of her hard work in supporting the committee and me personally, to ensure we can undertake our responsibilities effectively.

As Independent Chair, I am looking forward to continuing to lead the important work that is undertaken by Audit, Risk & Assurance Committee and also to building relationships with the new Chairs of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees, but I would also like to thank Councillor Bayton and Councillor McNicholas for the collaborative manner in which we have all worked together over the past year.



Introduction

This is the first joint scrutiny and audit annual report which outlines the key work activities and the outcomes of the West Midlands Combined Authority's statutory scrutiny and audit functions during 2023/24.

Overview & Scrutiny and Audit Functions

Overview, scrutiny and audit are statutory functions of the WMCA.

Two scrutiny committees discharge the responsibilities of overview and scrutiny through oversight of the work of the Mayor, portfolio lead members and the wider WMCA decision-making process in order to hold the region's political leaders to account and improve the quality and impact of the decisions that the WMCA makes.

Audit, Risk & Assurance Committee discharges the responsibility of audit by providing independent oversight of the audit, risk management, assurance and reporting arrangements that underpin good governance and financial standards and is chaired by an independent member of the public.

What We Do, and How We Do It

Pre-Policy Development - Considering and influencing policy areas and proposals before they are more formally developed.

Pre-Decision - Looking at topics and reports immediately before decisions are made by the WMCA Board.

Deep Dives and Topic Based Reviews – Establishing task & finish groups to undertake ‘deep dives’ and making reports and recommendations to be considered by the WMCA Board and/or other committees.

What is WMCA Overview & Scrutiny?

The WMCA’s two scrutiny committees provide important challenge and oversight of the WMCA’s plans priorities, governance arrangements and financial affairs.

The committees perform two distinct functions under the remit of ‘overview’ and ‘scrutiny’:

Overview - Focusing on the development of policy. This form of scrutiny is carried out in the earlier stages of policy development.

Scrutiny - Looking at decisions that have been made, or are about to be made. This form of scrutiny is often carried out in the immediate weeks leading up to a decision being made.

Advocating for Residents of the West Midlands

- Investigating issues that are important to local people's lives and by looking further into matters brought to its attention by the public.

Exercising the Power of Call-In of Decisions - Call-in decisions for further scrutiny and challenge prior to policy implementation.

Performance Monitoring - Monitoring the implementation, performance and impact of policies and decisions of the WMCA.

Our Transparency & Accountability

- Engagement with the 'business voice' – This brings a private sector voice to discussions at Overview & Scrutiny Committee and Audit, Risk & Assurance Committee, and ensures that the views of the region's commercial sector are heard at the highest levels of decision making.
- Agendas, reports and minutes posted online
- Meetings are held in public
- Livestream posted on YouTube
- Scrutiny and Audit Annual Report
- X / Twitter account @WMCA_Scrutiny
- Independent Chair, WMCA's Audit, Risk & Assurance Committee

Peer Learning/Sector Lead Improvement

- Combined Authorities Scrutiny Chairs' Forum
- Combined Authorities Governance Network
- Centre for Governance & Scrutiny
- Regional Scrutiny Network
- West Midlands Audit Committee Chairs Forum
- Partaking in other Combined Authorities Scrutiny Reviews

“Building a Culture of Scrutiny and Audit”

Scrutiny and audit are fundamental parts of any efficient and equitable governance structure and decision-making process. Both functions are at the heart of good decision-making, which the WMCA has welcomed, encouraged and continues to support throughout the organisation.

“The scrutiny and audit functions are a fundamental part of the WMCA’s governance and decision-making processes. The WMCA and its scrutiny/audit members have built and continue to build a strong culture of non-partisan, constructive, collaborative, productive and evidence-based scrutiny.”



Scrutiny - what's new for 2023/24

1. Transport Governance - New Arrangements

“With greater powers comes greater accountability”

This year, to help strengthen the lines of accountability for transport decision making in the WMCA, reduce duplication of meetings and provide a more effective platform for elected members to hold transport decision makers to account, the WMCA Board agreed to establish a new Transport Delivery Overview & Scrutiny Committee to provide oversight and scrutiny to Transport for West Midlands and transport decision makers.

2. Government's Scrutiny Protocol

“The Government's expectations as to how scrutiny should be carried out”

In announcing the Deeper Devolution Deal, the Government highlighted the importance of governance and accountability underpinning these new powers and responsibilities. These enhanced accountabilities have been framed within the English Devolution Accountability Framework, which was published in March 2023, and formed a key part of the Government's thinking in respect of local accountability. Within the West Midlands Deeper Devolution Deal, the Government had highlighted the importance of governance, accountability and effective scrutiny.

The Department for Housing, Levelling Up & Communities, together with combined authorities, have developed a Scrutiny Protocol which sets out the relationship between the Mayor, the WMCA and its scrutiny and audit functions.

3. Regular Performance & Outcomes Monitoring

“Taking a more active role in the review of performance against key indicators”

An area of focus for the committee for 2023/24 has been a focus on the WMCA’s key strategies and measuring the performance of the WMCA against its annual business plan. This has enabled members to better understand priorities and recommend action or inform future work activity.

Together with the WMCA, members have assisted in the development of performance information to be delivered in a format that has enabled them to undertake its scrutiny role in an effective way. This information is now being considered by members on a regular basis.

4. Scrutiny of the WMCA’s Statutory Officers

“The importance of senior officer engagement”

As part of its role in engaging with senior officers, this year members wanted to also focus on the decisions undertaken by the WMCA’s Statutory Officers.

5. The Use of External Experts

“Technical experts to enhance scrutiny of decisions”

During 2023/24, members have invited Homes England and the University of Birmingham to help inform and enhance their knowledge on particular subject matters that were to come forward for their consideration, particularly in respect of air quality, transport and housing.

6. Stronger Relationships with Stakeholders

“Greater engagement with local authorities”

We have started to have more engagement with scrutiny within local authorities and have taken our scrutiny ‘on the road’.



Audit - what's new for 2023/24

1. Review of the Internal Audit function

Following a review of the outsourced service provision having been provided by the City of Wolverhampton Council's internal audit in recent years, the WMCA decided to bring internal audit services in-house.

2. Organisational Audit Structures

A clear structure for the WMCA's internal audit team has been developed and designed together with audit members, with additional resourcing sourced to support delivery of the Internal Audit Plan during this transitional year. Recruitment for the In-House team was completed with a Head of Internal Audit & Information Governance joining the organisation in March 2024.

3. CIPFA

During 2023/24, audit members have utilised CIPFA guidelines on relevant matters to ensure the committee was reflective of statutory requirements. The consideration on the appointment of additional independent members continues.

4. Training

Audit members have received treasury management training this year, to support their role of oversight of financial matters including the approval of the Authority's annual statement of accounts.

5. External Auditor

The committee were introduced to the new External Auditor Engagement Leader who will have responsibility for overseeing the external audit of the WMCA Annual Report and Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2024.

Overview & Scrutiny's Focus for the Year

During the year, the work of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee has had a strong focus on the performance of the WMCA and the outcomes delivered against its strategic aims and objectives.

The committee has also focused on the implementation of the WMCA's Deeper Devolution Deal and its implications for enhanced scrutiny, the Government's Scrutiny Protocol and WMCA activity in relation to housing, skills and air quality.



Holding the Mayor of the West Midlands to Account

The committee has undertaken a number of public mayoral Q&A sessions, structured around two core themes ‘**accountability**’ and ‘**investment**’ with questions focusing on the key challenges, outcomes and benefits for the people of the West Midlands.

In October, the committee questioned the Mayor on the delivery and impact of the WMCA’s policies. Questions focused on:

- Governance and accountability
- Economy
- Skills and the labour market
- The green policy agenda
- Housing
- Transparency of the WMCA’s policies and business activity
- Community engagement

In December, the committee held its second Q&A and questioned the Mayor and the Lead Member for Finance on financial matters relating to the developing budget for 2024/25, with a particular focus on:

- Income generation opportunities, including a mayoral precept
- Autumn Statement
- Business and the economy
- The use of reserves
- Local authorities' financial position and the impact on the WMCA
- Transport, including bus franchising
- Combined authority funding

“These public Q&A sessions were an important part of providing public accountability and transparency of decision-making for the WMCA’s only directly elected politician.”



Mayoral Q&A Sessions - Key Findings and Outcomes

Delivery and Impact of the WMCA's Policies

The following matters were reported to the WMCA Board in November:

Economic Impact of HS2 (Cancellation of Birmingham - Manchester leg)

The Overview & Scrutiny Committee enquired as to when an analysis of the economic impact of the cancellation of the Birmingham - Manchester leg of HS2 would be undertaken and wished to review the report when completed. Overview & Scrutiny members also wanted to be kept abreast of the transportation transformations to be delivered with the funding to be provided within the Network North strategy, the implementation of the Midland

Rail Hub and on the timeline for delivery.

The Outcome: Response from the Mayor

The economic impact of the cancellation of the northern leg of HS2 was currently being considered as part of private sector work, which I commissioned alongside Andy Burnham (Mayor of Greater Manchester), with contributions from both the West Midlands and Greater Manchester combined authorities ahead of planned publication in the spring/summer of 2024. This work was primarily looking at how rail links between Birmingham and Manchester could be improved in light of the HS2 decision, but is also considering economic factors. As this was a large, complex piece of work it was difficult to be able to give an

exact date of when the findings will be available, due to the need to collate information from a variety of sources and to map this against impacts that might or might not be experienced, but as soon as more information was available, we would be happy to share with members.

To truly understand the economic impact, this private sector work would be supplemented by a WMCA commissioned piece of work to look at the specific impacts that would be felt within our region and how these will affect our regional economy. This would hopefully be available in March/April of 2024, and again we would be happy to share with members once complete.

Energy Creation

Although it was recognised that the current focus on the WMCA was to reduce energy consumption, Overview & Scrutiny Committee considered that the WMCA should also explore options for energy creation to help keep energy affordable for residents.

The Outcome: Response from the Mayor

The WMCA recognised the need to explore options to unlock barriers to local energy generation. With this in mind, we were working with partners on a number of initiatives, including Midlands Net Zero Hub who were completing a non-domestic solar mapping project. We were also talking with solar developers who were looking at grid-scale solar farms to service increasing industrial electricity demand as our industrial sector looked to decarbonise.

Community Engagement

The considerable work undertaken by the WMCA was recognised, but the importance of ensuring that this was communicated to local authorities and the public to ensure that maximum benefit from its activities was being achieved was stressed.

The Outcome: Response from the Mayor

The WMCA recognised the key importance of communicating and engaging with members, stakeholders, Government and the residents of the region on our work and its impact. In terms of engagement with councillors, this responsibility sits within the WMCA's Law & Governance directorate. Recently they introduced a new role of Member Relationship Manager to improve engagement with elected members across the region.

The WMCA communications team was responsible for engagement with residents. They did this through events, media, social media, marketing opportunities and community engagements events. Key project milestones and successes were highlighted with press releases, and associated social media was produced alongside it. Events were held to engage or collaborate with stakeholders, or where projects were being delivered or proposed that could have an impact on residents or businesses.

Labour Market Overview Information

Scrutiny members would welcome sight of the local labour market information referred to by the Mayor within the Q&A session on a regular basis.

The Outcome: Response from the Mayor

WMCA produced a monthly labour market and research briefing called 'WISE' (West Midlands Insights on Society and Economy). This would be shared with the committee in addition to the latest economic intelligence briefings going forward to provide ongoing updates.

WMCA's Budget 2024/25

The following matters were reported to the WMCA Board in January, as part of the proposed draft budget 2024/25.

The first joint Q&A session was held with members of Overview & Scrutiny Committee and Transport Delivery Overview & Scrutiny Committee in which members asked questions to the Mayor and Portfolio Lead Member for Finance on the medium-term financial pressures and the mitigation measures that will be a focus of the committee during the current and future years.

In addition, questions were also raised in relation to:

- The potential for a mayoral precept
- Network North funding
- The need for subsidy for public transport in urban areas
- An increase in the transport levy and support for this across the local authorities to sustain the current offer to residents
- Financial risk
- SMEs and access to funding pots
- The WMCA's funding approach
- Business rates retention
- West Midlands Cycle Hire Scheme and its financial viability and sustainability

The Outcome

The matters identified by Overview & Scrutiny Committee and Transport Delivery Overview & Scrutiny Committee that arose out of the Mayoral Q&A in December were considered as part of the draft budget 2024/25, which was submitted to the WMCA Board in January. A strong focus for scrutiny in the forthcoming year will be on the medium-term financial pressures in relation to transport.



Effectiveness and Outcome

Housing

Affordable Homes Programme

Representatives from Homes England and the WMCA's Housing and Regeneration team were invited to answer questions on the Affordable Homes Programme within the West Midlands, as set out in the Deeper Devolution Deal agreed by the WMCA and the Government in March.



Future Focus Point

- Estate regeneration and examples of where local authorities were seeking to work with the WMCA to regenerate estates
- The delivery of social housing
- Resource and funding post 2026

Affordable Housing Supply Strategy

Scrutiny members considered the Affordable Housing Supply Strategy that was informed by the recommendations of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee's 2021/22 'Helping to Deliver Affordable and Social Housing' scrutiny review, in particular the recommendation of the panel:

“That the WMCA, housing associations, Homes England and local authorities continue to work together to address the contradictions and challenges of the current system for delivery of affordable and social housing – recognising that the challenge cannot be addressed in isolation, and it is a multi-faceted systemic issue where all agencies need to work together with a clear strategy for change.”



Future Focus Point

- Creation of Green Spaces
- Key Performance Indicators and the provision of information to undertake benchmarking
- Brownfield land redevelopment

Pre-Decision Scrutiny: Homes for the Future: Draft Strategy

The Overview & Scrutiny Committee considered and contributed to the development of the Homes for the Future draft strategy prior to its submission to the WMCA Board for approval.



The Outcome

The Overview & Scrutiny Committee endorsed the official release of the WMCA's Homes for the Future proposals, subject to assurances sought in relation to retrofit and non-domestic dwellings, the pace of delivery of homes on decontaminated sites and support provided for SMEs and smaller developers within the region on adopting the standards.

Skills

Pre-Decision Scrutiny: Employment and Skills Strategy for Deeper Devolution

Scrutiny members were engaged on the development of an Employment and Skills Strategy for the WMCA area, and development and implementation of a new approach to Employment, Skills, Health and Communities benefits, including the establishment of a new outcomes framework.



The Outcome

The Overview & Scrutiny Committee endorsed the Employment and Skills Strategy and Outcomes Framework.



Future Focus Point

As part of its lines of enquiry for 2024/25, Overview & Scrutiny Committee will focus on:

- Skills and qualifications
- The increase in youth unemployment
- Benchmarking against other combined authority areas
- The provision of training linked to the current and future labour market opportunities

Air Quality

Pre-Decision Scrutiny: WMCA Air Quality Framework and Implementation Plan

In November, members scrutinised the WMCA's Air Quality Framework and Implementation Plan prior to its submission and approval by WMCA Board. Questions focused on health risks associated to wood burners and the need for stricter regulations, the success of Walsall in requiring a full assessment of the impact of wood burners within permitted regulations and environmental mitigations within the air quality framework.



The Outcome

The Overview & Scrutiny Committee endorsed the WMCA's Air Quality Framework and Implementation Plan, subject to the inclusion of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee within its governance structure.

The Economy

West Midlands State of the Region

The West Midlands State of the Region was a high-level report that brought to attention the most important trends in the West Midlands. It was an annual review that considered data relevant for comparison at yearly or longer-term basis.



The Outcome

The Overview & Scrutiny Committee welcomed the report, as it provided a good summary with data information as to the current condition of the West Midlands.

As requested by the committee, future reports would include information on in-work claimants' figures, 'ghost children' and home schooling, and should also be brought to the attention of the WMCA Board.



Future Focus Point

The areas identified by the Overview & Scrutiny Committee that it wished to review as part of its 2024/25 work programme including:

- 'Ghost children' post-Covid
- Connectivity
- Air quality
- Retrofit skills

Scrutiny in the Spotlight

Good Scrutiny? Good Question!

Government's Scrutiny Protocol

The publication of the Government's new Scrutiny Protocol as part of its Autumn Statement was welcomed, providing further guidance to authorities with devolved powers like the WMCA on its overview & scrutiny arrangements.

Scrutiny members agreed a four-stage approach to the implementation of the Government's Scrutiny Protocol:

- **Phase 1** - Review
- **Phase 2** - Self-Assessment
- **Phase 3** - Implementation
- **Phase 4** - Evaluation

Review (September 2023 – January 2024)

Prior to the publication of the Government's Scrutiny Protocol, scrutiny members were engaged in the development of the protocol and the general direction of travel in respect of the Government's view of scrutiny within authorities with Level 4 devolution through regular update reports and briefings.

Following its publication in November, member knowledge briefing sessions were attended on the 18 key principles identified within the protocol, with opportunities to provide emerging thoughts and comments.

Self-Assessment (March – April 2024)

A Scrutiny Working Group consisting of the Chairs and Vice-Chairs of Overview & Scrutiny Committee, Transport Delivery Overview & Scrutiny Committee and Audit, Risk & Assurance Committee was established to undertake an open and honest

assessment of the current scrutiny and audit arrangements and activities against each of the 18 key principles.

An action plan of improvements had been developed to demonstrate how improvements would be made to the current scrutiny and audit functions together with timescales that would be monitored to ensure delivery.

Implementation (May - December 2024)

Work will be undertaken in 2024/25 to implement further improvements to the scrutiny arrangements of the WMCA arising out of the self-assessment exercise, to fully comply with the ambitions, set out within the Scrutiny Protocol.

Evaluation (January 2025)

Work will then be taken later in the year to evaluate the impact of the changes introduced, and whether these should be further reformed.

Deep Dive Review: Brownfield Land Remediation

“To examine and assess how the WMCA exercises its powers and funding in respect of brownfield land redevelopment and to assess how the region’s communities have benefited”

Following a series of questions raised by the Overview & Scrutiny Committee in relation to the WMCA’s Brownfield Land Remediation Fund, scrutiny members undertook a review to understand and assess how the WMCA exercises its powers and funding in respect of brownfield land redevelopment and to assess how the region’s communities had benefited.

The Evidence

The review group sought a range of written and verbal evidence to help inform its conclusions and recommendations. In addition to the written evidence, the review group conducted face-to-face interviews with a range of key witnesses to help build a better understanding on the current situation, decision-making process, relationships, challenges, failures, benefits and to highlight any areas of potential improvements. Key participants included:

- John Godfrey, Executive Director of Housing, Property & Regeneration

- Professor Chaminda Pathirage, Director of the National Brownfield Institute
- Andrew Stott, Centre Manager of the National Brownfield Institute;
- Stuart Penn, Regional Managing Director, Lovell Homes

Emerging themes and consideration:

- The ability and capacity of SMEs to identify and appraise brownfield land opportunities across the region
- The introduction of innovative pilot planning policies which are designed to support and facilitate the delivery of brownfield regeneration zones.
- Ensuring greater transparency and accessibility to available incentives which assist in unlocking and expediting the delivery of brownfield sites.
- Developing a more integral bio-diversity policy which provides developers with a framework for on-site eco offsetting.

- Examining the potential to enhance brownfield land registers so that they include wider and more comprehensive information.
- Responding to developer feedback which indicates that the WMCA's existing grant approval processes are inefficient and can, as a result, introduce barriers and avoidable delays to progressing applications in a timely manner.
- To help support developer cashflow and exposure to significant upfront costs, consideration be given to a revised grant draw-down profile (and associated security package) which enables a first tranche funding allocation during site enabling works.
- The importance of promoting the house building industry to the community

A full report on the findings of the review together with recommendations will be considered by the Overview & Scrutiny Committee in July 2024, prior to its submission to the WMCA Board for approval.

Transport Delivery Overview & Scrutiny Committee

The first meeting of the newly formed Transport Delivery Overview & Scrutiny Committee was held in July.

Focus for the Year

Deeper Devolution Deal Implementation (Transport)

The committee continued to be engaged in, and have oversight of, the Deeper Devolution Deal between the WMCA and Government, its transport commitments and the Transport Implementation Plan. Questions focused on the passenger, transport corridors and the best mode of transport for each corridor.

“a one size fits all approach would not be appropriate as different sized cities, towns and villages would all have different requirements”



The Outcome

Six-monthly progress reports on the Transport Implementation Plan be submitted to future meetings of the committee.

HS2 Announcements & Network North Funding

A focus of the Transport Delivery Overview & Scrutiny Committee has been on the HS2 programme following the Government's announcement in December in respect of the cancellation of the HS2 line north of Birmingham.



The Outcome

A future report to come forward to scrutiny on funding allocated to Network North projects, any funding gap for these projects based on previous funding assumptions. The funding allocated to the Midlands Rail Hub and whether any additional projects were to be included in this in the absence of the HS2 northern leg.



Future Bus Policy Delivery (Franchising and Enhanced Bus Partnerships)

Members continue to receive briefings and opportunities to share their views on the ongoing bus options development work and Enhanced Partnership Scheme. Lines of enquiry have mainly focused on funding sources for subsidised bus services over the next five years (long term and short-term funding)



The Outcome

Transport for West Midlands agreed to develop a detailed timetable for completing the full franchising assessment in preparation for a decision to progress further to audit and consultation by the WMCA Board in July 2024, to include scrutiny engagement to provide transparency and assurance that emerging thoughts and proposals would be subject to public scrutiny.

“The nature of bus operators within the region, needed to give greater priority to passenger needs”

Draft Safer Travel Plan 2024 - 27

Members have raised their concerns about the reduction of Police Community Support Officers and have continued to be engaged on how the gap would be covered.

“Collaboration with local police, both on the network and within the local community, is crucial to reducing issues on the travel network”



The Outcome

Scrutiny members to receive a further report in July 2024, prior to the publication of the new Safer Travel Plan in Autumn 2024.

What is the Role of Green Infrastructure in Urban Design for Air Quality and Climate Resilience?

To help members answer this question, the committee had invited the University of Birmingham to discuss how green infrastructure in urban design could reduce exposure to poor air quality and support climate resilience.



The Outcome

The Local Transport Plan would now include the ‘reduce, extend, protect’ principle, to support the role of green infrastructure in urban transport design for air quality.

A review of the draft Green Transport Revolution Big Move Chapter would be undertaken to ensure it effectively encompasses the role of green infrastructure in supporting climate resilience in the West Midlands.

Ring & Ride Target Operating Model

Transport for West Midlands has continued to engage with scrutiny members in the emerging future target operating model for the region's Ring & Ride Service.



The Outcome

The comments, concerns and thoughts of the committee would be reflected in a Mayoral report, including:

- The review to consider providing fair access and address transport barriers
- Capacity constraints of the service
- Funding possibilities from Network North
- Allocation of funding
- The need for additional data
- Criteria to be reviewed and possibilities for subsidising service use for community diagnostic

Capital Delivery Programme

Monitoring the delivery of the WMCA's Capital Programme was significant and the Transport Delivery Overview & Scrutiny Committee continue to work with officers to develop a report with the appropriate information to enable members to monitor the progress in respect of the capital programme and to identify future focus areas.



Member Engagement Groups

The Transport Delivery Overview & Scrutiny Committee has also introduced six Member Engagement Groups (MEGs) that provide members with an opportunity to meet and discuss in more detail transport-related issues that are grouped around broad thematic areas. These MEGs are supported by officers from Transport for West Midlands and, whilst not decision making, provide a forum for members to develop a deeper understanding of those matters that would not otherwise be able to be discussed in such detail at formal committee meetings.



Air Quality, Congestion and Environmental Impact MEG

The MEG had reviewed and contributed to the:

- West Midlands Air Quality Policy, Strategy and Measures
- West Midlands Local Transport Plan Development
- West Midlands Bus Network and Current Issues
- Approaches and priorities of West Midlands local authorities to reduce NO₂ and PM_{2.5} emissions
- The draft WMCA regional air quality framework implementation plan
- Updates on the Defra review of Euro VI Bus Retrofitting scheme
- The role of hydrogen for buses and updates on ZEBRA funding bid

In addition, members have also worked closely with the University of Birmingham on:

- Air quality and public health
- The role of green infrastructure in urban design
- The impact on air quality of lowering motorway speed limits in the West Midlands
- The impact on air quality of bus fleet electrification

Midlands Hydrogen and Fuel Cell Network:

- The future role of hydrogen (and fuel cells) for the transport sector



Outcome 1

Air Quality Framework & Implementation Plan

Recommendation accepted by the Transport Delivery Overview & Scrutiny Committee:

- as part of development of the Regional Air Quality Framework, stretch targets which were more ambitious in terms of timescales and pollutant concentration targets than the Government's air quality targets, and which were closer to World Health Organisation targets for NO₂ and PM^{2.5}, be agreed.

This recommendation was also accepted by the WMCA Board on 17 November 2023.



Outcome 2

The Use of Experts

The work of the Member Engagement Group in respect of Air Quality and the Environment has led to:

- a presentation by the University of Birmingham on the role of green infrastructure to Transport Delivery Overview & Scrutiny Committee in January 2024



Outcome 3

West Midlands Local Transport Plan

Recommendations accepted by the Transport Delivery Overview & Scrutiny Committee:

Transport for West Midlands to:

- Incorporate in the Local Transport Plan the ‘reduce, extend, protect’ principle, to support the role of green infrastructure in urban transport design for air quality; and
- Review the draft ‘Green Transport Revolution’ Big Move Chapter to ensure it effectively encompasses the role of green infrastructure in supporting climate resilience in the West Midlands.



Outcome 4

Bus Operators and the transition to a Zero Emission Bus Fleet

Recommendation accepted by the Transport Delivery Overview & Scrutiny Committee:

- The committee to urge Transport for West Midlands and bus operators to accelerate the transition to a zero-emission bus fleet in the West Midlands.
- The MEG will also seek to engage National Highways to consider the issues related to reducing 70mph motorway speed limits in the West Midlands. This is in relation to the 2023 WMCA regional air quality framework action ‘TRN15 Speed limit reduction (or dynamic speed limits) on high-speed roads’

Rail, Metro & Sprint MEG

The focus of the MEG has been on:

- Midlands Rail Hub and the wider network connectivity benefits
- Midland Metro Ltd and performance
- Sprint – key statistics for phase 1 to Walsall
- HS2 and Midlands Rail Hub
- Eastside Metro extension
- Dudley Port Integrated Transport Hub
- Buy-Before-You-Board concept for West Midlands Metro
- Pay-as-You-Go on rail West Midlands pilot
- Birmingham to Longbridge, and Hagley Road (Edgbaston) to Halesowen Corridors – Mass Transit Options Appraisal Studies
- Open access rail proposals from Wrexham, Shropshire & Midlands Railway
- The work of the West Midlands Rail Executive
- Cross City Bus consultations for Package 4 (Longbridge to Castle Vale) and Package 6W (Soho Road)

Passenger & Road Safety MEG

The focus of the MEG has been on:

- Long-term funding for Transport Safety Officers, post-2025
- Passenger safety statistics
- Road safety statistics
- The refreshed regional road safety strategy 2023 – 2030

Finance & Performance MEG

The focus of the MEG has been on:

- The transport revenue and the risk around the Medium-Term Financial Plan, and mitigation measures
- Bus delivery options
- Performance reporting

Passenger First MEG

The focus of the MEG has been on:

- The Bus Service Improvement Plan
- West Midlands Bus Passenger Charter
- Operator funding and services and the impact on the passenger
- A review of the Ring & Ride Service
- The Closure of Dudley bus station for redevelopment
- Bus Network Performance System
- Fares and ticketing
- Realtime information Issues
- Community engagement



Outcome 1

Service Information

Recommendation accepted by the Transport Delivery Overview & Scrutiny Committee:

Councillors and the resources of individual councils to be made full use of when information needs to reach as many passengers as possible.



Outcome 2

Ring & Ride Target Operating Model

Recommendation accepted by the Transport Delivery Overview & Scrutiny Committee:

Transport for West Midlands to look at specific targets and how feedback can best be obtained from a broad range of users including Ring & Ride drivers.



Outcome 3

Service Information

Recommendation accepted by the Transport Delivery Overview & Scrutiny Committee:

The use of all local radio stations to share important information for free, via their channels should be explored.

Sustainability & Active Travel

The focus of the MEG has been on:

- Transport for West Midlands Zero Emission Bus Delivery Plan and its alignment with fleet modernisation
- Sustainable travel to school
- Mobility Hubs and supporting net-zero targets by reducing car travel
- Local Travel Point Pilot Project – Cross Street, Halesowen



Outcome 1

Living Streets Walk to School Programme

Recommendation accepted by the Transport Delivery Overview & Scrutiny Committee:

- Members identified similarities with Mobility Hubs in the Netherlands. Transport for West Midlands to use real photography of similar schemes to reinforce that Mobility Hubs can be a reality in the future.



Outcome 2

Local Travel Points

Recommendation accepted by the Transport Delivery Overview & Scrutiny Committee:

- Local Travel Point planning applications should reflect biodiversity net gain requirements.



Holding Those Responsible for Transport To Account

Councillor Mike Bird, Portfolio Lead for Transport

In October 2023, a Q&A was held with Councilor Mike Bird, Portfolio Lead for Transport, on transport policy and delivery related matters. Members questioned him on:

- New Local Transport Plan
 - The green agenda
 - Transport funding pressures
 - HS2 (Cancellation of Birmingham to Manchester Leg)
 - Reliability of the bus service
 - Reliability of rail services
 - Delivery of Wednesbury to Brierley Hill Metro extension
- Hydrogen buses
 - Bus franchising
 - Community engagement and buy-in



Outcome 1

In-depth Review of Real-Time Information

WMCA to consider encouraging bus operators to improve the technology on buses to encourage accurate and reliable real-time information.

Scrutiny members undertook a more in-depth review of the real time information system that had a focus on:

- responsibilities
- technological interdependencies
- processes required to deliver accurate and trustworthy real time information for passengers



Outcome 2

Demand Responsive Transport

The WMCA to consider using a demand responsive transport system to improve reliability.

An analysis report on the future of demand responsive transport and Ring & Ride had been requested and considered by scrutiny members.



Outcome 3

Communications and Engagement

Scrutiny members together with WMCA officers had identified communication and member engagement as an area that needed further review.

A deep dive review into the effectiveness of the WMCA's communication and engagement had been initiated.

Deep Dive: Member Engagement and Development

“The Effectiveness of Member Engagement and Development”

Following a Q&A session with the Portfolio Lead Member for Transport on transport policy and delivery related matters, and feedback received from visits to local authority scrutiny committee meetings, at its meeting in December, this committee agreed to establish a task & finish group to review the effectiveness of member engagement and development within the WMCA and to make recommendations as to how this could be further developed and improved.

Evidence Gathering

Evidence was heard from a wide range of stakeholders as to the current engagement and development that was undertaken with councillors currently sitting on a WMCA committee, as well as with those councillors who were not currently participating in WMCA decision making, but still wished to be informed and engaged in the WMCA's activities.

Key participants included:

- Councillor Matthew Dormer, Leader, Redditch Borough Council
- James Hughes, Member Relationship Manager, WMCA
- Laura Shoaf, Chief Executive, WMCA
- Councillor Stephen Simkins, Leader, City of Wolverhampton Council
- Councillor Bob Sleight, Deputy Mayor, WMCA



Themes and Recommendations

The recommendations were agreed by the Transport Delivery Overview & Scrutiny Committee that will be presented to the WMCA Board in June 2024 for consideration. The recommendations were grouped around four key areas of activity:

Member Induction/Training

Develop a comprehensive induction programme / onboarding arrangements for new and returning members.

Member/Council Engagement

Look to create further opportunities to engage with all constituent and non constituent authority members.

Governance

- Consider establishing portfolio-specific political structures involving cabinet members from constituent authorities and the corresponding WMCA portfolio lead to discuss strategy and delivery matters
- Consider establishing political structures involving non-constituent leaders and the political leadership of the WMCA
- Local authorities be encouraged to consider making multi-year appointments to WMCA committees aligned to the mayoral term of office
- A role profile be developed for members appointed to all WMCA committees setting out the expectations and commitment requirements of the role
- Engagement mechanisms and governance processes be codified within the constitution

Resource

Further consideration be given to strengthening the WMCA's financial and nonfinancial resources to support scrutiny and member engagement improvements.



Looking Forward: “What Next for Scrutiny”?

Evolving the Role of Overview & Scrutiny

“For scrutiny to remain effective it’s important to undertake regular open and honest conversations and self-assessments to improve current practices and arrangements.”

Monitoring of Scrutiny Recommendations

To undertake regular monitoring of recommendations made by the committee and their implementation and effectiveness.

Review of Call-In Process

To engage with the WMCA to ensure that there is greater clarity on the operation of the call-in process particularly in respect of Delegated Sign-off decisions.

Holding Portfolio Lead Members to Account

Greater scrutiny of the WMCA's Portfolio Lead Members. Members will strengthen this area of scrutiny during 2024/25 by inviting Portfolio Lead Members on a regular basis to meetings of scrutiny when considering reports within their portfolio area.

Greater Focus on the delivery of the Capital Programme

A greater focus on the delivery of the capital programme and underspend.

Public Engagement within the scrutiny process

Greater use of social media and the comms team to engage with members of the public to help inform written questions, deep dives and potential future activity of the scrutiny function.

Comprehensive Training Programme

A greater focus will be on member training and development during 2024/25 to enable members to undertake their role effectively.

Overview & Scrutiny Committee Members - 2023/24



Councillor Cathy Bayton
Dudley (Association of Black
Country Authorities)
Committee Chair



Councillor Philip Bateman
Wolverhampton



Councillor Naeem Akhtar
Coventry
Committee Vice-Chair



Councillor Ian Kettle
Dudley



Councillor Andrew Burrow
Solihull



Councillor Nigel Lumby
Shropshire



Councillor Ewan Mackey
Birmingham



Councillor Jamie Tennant
Birmingham



Councillor Emma Marshall
Redditch



Amanda Tomlinson
Business Voice - Black Country
Housing Group



Councillor Paul Moore
Sandwell



Councillor Adrian Warwick
Warwickshire



Councillor Lauren Rainbow
Birmingham



Councillor Vera Waters
Walsall

Transport Delivery Overview & Scrutiny Committee Members - 2023/24



Councillor John McNicholas
Coventry
Committee Chair



Councillor Mary Locke
Birmingham
Committee Vice-Chair



Councillor Robert Alden
Birmingham



Councillor Pervez Akhtar
Coventry



Councillor Aqeela Choudhry
Sandwell



Councillor Zaker Choudhry
Birmingham



Councillor Carol Hyatt
Wolverhampton



Councillor Amo Hussain
Walsall



Councillor Timothy Huxtable
Birmingham



Councillor Narinder Kaur Kooner
Birmingham



Councillor Emma Marshall
Redditch



Councillor Martin McCarthy
Solihull



Councillor Barbara McGarrity
Wolverhampton



Councillor Steve Melia
Sandwell



Councillor Saddak Miah
Birmingham



Councillor Ian Nellins
Shropshire



Councillor Josh O'Nyons
Solihull



Councillor David Stanley
Dudley



Councillor Gurmeet Singh Sohal
Walsall



Councillor Alan Taylor
Dudley



Councillor Robert Tromans
Warwickshire



Councillor Antony Tucker
Coventry



Councillor Ian Ward
Birmingham

Audit, Risk & Assurance Committee

Focus in 2023/24

In addition to its work programme, a focus of the Audit, Risk & Assurance Committee this year has been to develop a relationship with the two scrutiny committees to share issues of common interest, particularly in respect of the recently published scrutiny protocol. Regular attendance at the West Midlands Audit Committee Chairs forum had also be beneficial to share best practice and issues.

Internal Audit

Audit, Risk and Assurance Committee has a key role in the approval and monitoring of the delivery of the risk based Annual Internal Audit plan. This has been particularly relevant throughout the past year with the 2023/24 being a transitional year following management's decision to develop an in-house provision following this previously being delivered via an outsourcing model for a number of years.

Key items for consideration during the year have included:

- Review of the 22/23 Annual audit report including the Head of Internal Audit's annual audit opinion providing a 'Reasonable' assurance on the overall adequacy and effectiveness of the organisation's framework of governance, risk management and internal control
- Approval of the 23/24 Internal Audit plan in April 2023
- Oversight of the structure and establishment of the new in-house audit team
- The monitoring of resource availability and capability to deliver the 23/24 plan
- Assessment of audit outcomes and the delivery of audit recommendations
- The monitoring of whistleblowing claims received by the WMCA and outcome of issues raised with, and investigated by Internal Audit

Risk Management

The Strategic Risk Register was presented to committee periodically through the year in order for members to discharge their role in assessing the WMCA's ability to adequately identify and address key risks of the authority.

Audit members are satisfied there is demonstrable evidence that strategic risks are actively being managed with members focussing on individual risks where greater detail is required, including:

- The management of the risk pertaining to WMCA's external factors and financial due diligence
- Negotiations for the Single Settlement and ratification of the Trailblazer Devolution Deal
- To seek assurance that the authority has satisfactory due diligence arrangements in place when awarding contracts in response to a key supplier of the rail programme going into administration

Financial Management

Audit, Risk & Assurance Committee continues to have oversight of the financial management arrangements in place for WMCA throughout the year, including the approval of the 2022/23 accounts in January 2024.

Key areas of financial management having been requested by audit members during this year has included:

- Oversight of the Treasury management arrangements in place including the borrowing and investments held by WMCA
- A presentation of WMCA's revenue and capital budgets to support members in their remit of financial monitoring
- The endorsement of the draft 2024/25 treasury Management Policy Statement and Treasury Management Strategy for onward approval by WMCA Board

- Receipt and consideration of the External Auditor's Annual Accounts report for the year ending 31st March 2022

What is Assurance?

As a Combined Authority, the WMCA is obligated to have an Assurance Framework in place, approved by WMCA Board and the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities. The WMCA has a Single Assurance Framework in place for this purpose, with the development and delivery of all projects and programmes being funded through an external source being required to follow this framework.

Assurance activities

Single Assurance Framework

Audit, Risk & Assurance Committee members continue to review on a quarterly basis the progress of all WMCA projects and programmes progressing through the Single Assurance Framework.

Health & Safety

Members considered an annual report of the Health and Safety arrangements in place for WMCA in March by the Health and Safety manager.

Information Security

Committee continue to have oversight of delivery of the audit actions arising from the 2022/23 internal audit of Information Security and Cyber Security with regular updates.

Information Governance

During this year, members have focussed on the arrangements for Information Governance within the WMCA in meeting its obligations under the UK General Data Protection Regulation, the Data Protection Act 2018 and the Freedom of Information Act 2000.



The Outcome

Health & Safety

Members were content that satisfactory arrangements are in place and welcomed the organisation having maintained the ISO 45001 accreditation for Health & Safety.

Arm's Length Companies

Audit members had requested a report from the Director of Law & Governance, to provide assurance that appropriate governance arrangements are in place for companies where WMCA has an interest.



The Outcome

Arm's Length Companies

Regular reports on the status of the WMCA's interest in all arm's length companies would now be submitted to the committee.

The WMCA to submit a detailed report on the monitoring arrangements for all of its arm's length companies at a future meeting for approval.

Annual Governance Statement

The Annual Governance Statement for 2022/23 was approved by members in January 2024 alongside the presentation of the annual accounts for that year, with the draft Annual Governance Statement for 2023/24 being presented for consideration in March 2024.

Terms of Reference

Audit members have undertaken a review of its Terms of Reference this year. It has been noted CIPFA guidelines recommends a minimum of two independent members are included within the membership of audit committees, with ARAC members supporting the recruitment of an additional member by WMCA.



The Outcome

Terms of Reference

CIPFA guidelines recommends a minimum of two independent members are included within the membership of audit committees. The recruitment of an additional independent member was supported by Audit, Risk & Assurance Committee members.

What next - Looking forward 2024/25

ARAC self-assessment

Internal Audit to support the introduction of annual self-assessment by members to determine the committee's training requirements

Membership

A drive for committee members to be retained as members of ARAC for a period of 4 years

Internal Audit service

The development of an in-house internal audit framework and service will improve the visibility of the risk and control environments within the WMCA.

Single Settlement preparedness

Attention will be given to the monitoring of WMCA's preparedness for the commencement of the Single Settlement, due in April 2025.

CIPFA Audit Committee guidelines

A review, and implementation where required, of the Audit Committee guidelines as set out by CIPFA, including private access to the Head of Internal Audit and External Audit.

Audit, Risk & Assurance Committee Members - 2023/24



Mark Smith
Independent Chair



Councillor Ram Lakha, OBE
Coventry
Vice-Chair



Councillor Karen Ashley
Redditch



Councillor Nick Bardsley
Shropshire



Councillor Richard Baxter-Payne
Nuneaton & Bedworth Borough
Council



Councillor Dave Borley
Dudley



Councillor Jaspreet Jaspal
Wolverhampton



Councillor Brigid Jones
Birmingham



Councillor Leslie Kaye
Solihull



Councillor Rose Martin
Walsall



Councillor Liam Preece
Sandwell



Lisa Ritchie
Business Voice

Connect with Scrutiny

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Web: governance.wmca.org.uk



**West Midlands
Combined Authority**

Birmingham City Council

Report to City Council

5th November 2024



Title:	Lead Member Report – West Midlands Police and Crime Panel
Lead Member:	Councillor Rashad Mahmood – Birmingham City Council Lead Panel Member
Relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee:	Not applicable
Has this report been shared with the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee Chair?	No
Report Author:	Sarah Fradgley, Overview and Scrutiny Manager Legal and Governance 0121 303 1727 sarah.fradgley@birmingham.gov.uk
Authorised by:	Christian Scade Head of Scrutiny and Committee Services Legal and Governance
Is this a Key Decision?	No Forward Plan Reference: Not applicable
Reason(s) why not included on the Forward Plan and confirm who has authorised it to be considered:	Not applicable
Is this a Late Report?	No
Reason(s) why Late and confirm who has authorised it to be considered:	Not applicable
Is this decision eligible for ‘call in?’	No
If ‘call-in’ has been dis-applied, please provide reason(s) and confirm who has authorised:	No applicable
Wards:	Not applicable

Does this report contain exempt or confidential information?

No

Has this decision been included on the Notification of Intention to consider Matters in Private?

Not applicable

Reasons why not included on the Notification and confirm who has authorised it to be considered:

Not applicable

1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report provides a summary of the key activities of the West Midlands Police and Crime Panel (“the Panel”) since November 2023 in its scrutiny of the Police and Crime Commissioner (“the PCC”).
- 1.2 The Panel is a joint committee of the seven West Midlands districts established in 2012 under the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act to scrutinise the activities and decisions of the PCC.
- 1.3 Birmingham has three members on the Panel, Councillor Rashad Mahmood, Councillor Gareth Moore and Councillor Izzy Knowles (Councillor Scott, Councillor Barrie and Councillor Jan act as named substitutes).

2 COMMISSIONERS’ REVIEW

- 2.1 Commissioners approve recommendations.

3 RECOMMENDATIONS

That City Council:

- 3.1 **Notes the content of the report and the update provided on the activities of the West Midlands Police and Crime Panel between November 2023 and November 2024.**

4 KEY INFORMATION

4.1 Role of the Police and Crime Panel

- 4.2 The Panel is a joint scrutiny committee of the West Midland district councils with a dual role to ‘support and challenge’ the work of the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC).
- 4.3 The Panel acts as a critical friend on behalf of West Midlands residents and must perform the following statutory functions:
- Review and comment on the PCC’s draft Police and Crime Plan.
 - Review the PCC's Annual Reports.
 - Scrutinise decisions and actions of the PCC.
 - Review (with the power to veto) the PCC's proposed Council Tax precept.
 - Hold confirmation hearings before the PCC makes certain senior appointments (Chief Constable, Deputy PCC, Chief Executive and Chief Finance Officer), with the power to veto the Chief Constable appointment.
 - Handle non-criminal complaints about the conduct of the PCC and Deputy PCC, referring serious complaints to the Independent Office for Police Conduct (This task delegated to the Birmingham Monitoring Officer).
 - Appoint an acting PCC if required.
 - Suspend the PCC if charged.

- 4.4 The Panel's work programme consists of statutory tasks (listed above) and wider exploratory work to build knowledge and insight into the strategic policing, community safety and criminal justice landscape to fulfil its role to hold the PCC to account.
- 4.5 The Panel must maintain a strategic focus when scrutinising the work of the PCC, rather than scrutinising operational detail.
- 4.6 Panel Membership**
- 4.7 The Panel consists of 12 councillors appointed annually representing the 7 West Midland districts. Membership must reflect the political balance of the region. Named substitutes are appointed for each councillor member. Three independent members also serve on the Panel. Birmingham City Council has three members on the Panel.
- 4.8 The Panel elected Councillor Jasbir Jaspal (City of Wolverhampton) as Chair and Kristina Murphy (Independent Co-opted Member) as Vice Chair for the 2024/2025 Municipal Year.
- 4.9 Meetings and agenda papers**
- 4.10 The Panel meets approximately six times a year at venues across the region. Meeting papers, meeting dates, published reports, together with more information about the Panel can be found on the Panel's website: www.westmidlandspcp.org.uk Meetings are livestreamed for the public. Links to web streams are published on the Panel website alongside the meeting papers.
- 4.11 Panel Resources and Officer Support**
- 4.12 The Panel operates within the limits of a ringfenced Home Office Grant. The Panel agreed in 2012 that councillor members would not use this to draw special responsibility allowances, but travel and carer expenses can be claimed.
- 4.13 Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council's Chief Executive provides lead officer support. Birmingham City Council acts as secretariat and provides administrative, scrutiny and legal support.
- 4.14 Key activities by the Police and Crime Panel (November 2023 – November 2024)**
- 4.15 **November 2023:** The Panel reviewed the Commissioner's 2022/23 Annual Report and the progress against the Police and Crime Plan objectives. The Panel published a report with recommendations for the PCC to consider for improving the content of the report and provide greater clarity to the public on progress and the trajectory of performance and trends.
- 4.16 **December 2023:** The Panel reacted to the publication of the His Majesty's Inspector for Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) 'notice of concern' that placed West Midlands Police in Engage Status of enhanced monitoring. An extraordinary panel meeting was called to seek assurance from

the PCC on actions planned to address the HMICFRS findings and his oversight of improvements made by the Force. To inform this work and understand the context of the inspection findings, members received an information briefing from the HMICFRS on its inspection regime.

- 4.17 **January 2024:** Scrutiny of the PCC's oversight of the performance of West Midlands Police continued and the Panel discussed the 2022/2023 full HMICFRS PEEL Inspection report of West Midlands Police. The Panel also scrutinised the PCC's police and crime plan commitments to tackle drugs and learnt about the diversionary and prevention work to address the underlying causes of substance misuse.
- 4.18 **February 2024:** The Panel invited the Chief Constable to provide ongoing reassurances on actions to address the four areas of concern raised by HMICFRS and the wider recommendations in the PEEL Inspection Report. The Panel also conducted its formal review of the PCC proposed 2024 policing precept. To understand the context of the proposals, all members were invited to a training session on police finance and examined the PCC's proposed budget, capital programme and reserve's policy. Following the meeting, the Panel published its report and recommendation to support the proposed precept.
- 4.19 **March 2024:** The Panel considered the PCC's 'End of Term Report' that highlighted several key milestones that had been achieved during his 2021-24 term of office. The Panel obtained reassurances that criminal justice initiatives commissioned by the PCC had received positive academic evaluations. Annual updates from the panel lead officer monitoring the panel budget and expenditure, and the administration of PCC complaints were also considered.
- 4.20 **May 2024:** Simon Foster was re-elected as PCC for a four-year term. The new Municipal Year saw new members appointed to the Panel. All members and named substitute members were invited to participate in induction training covering the role and responsibilities of the Panel and work programming.
- 4.21 **July 2024:** the Panel held its AGM. Members considered reports by the PCC on recent activities and performance monitoring and the development of the new Police and Crime Plan. Members provided constructive challenge on the proposed public consultation campaign.
- 4.22 The Panel also held a confirmation hearing for the Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner post. Members put questions to the Commissioner's proposed candidate, Mr Wasim Ali, to assess his suitability and experience for the position. The Panel recommended the PCC proceed with the appointment.
- 4.23 **October 2024:** The Panel considered a second update report on the development of the PCC Police and Crime Plan. Members sought reassurances on the work of the commissioner's office to evaluate the responses to the call for evidence from partnership organisations and experts, as well as comments gathered from public consultation events. The Panel will formally review the draft plan in January.

- 4.24 The Chief Constable also addressed the meeting reporting back on the work to respond to HMICFRS 'Notice of Concern' that led to it place West Midlands Police into Engage Status of enhanced monitoring in December 2023. The Panel commended the PCC and Chief Constable for the rapid improvement that had led to the Inspectorate removing the force from Engage Status in September.
- 4.25 The Panel also examined the PCC's Statement of Accounts to build knowledge and insight of the financial position ahead of the Panel's review of the PCC's budget and proposed precept in February.
- 4.26 **Use of Information Subgroup:** The Panel has formed a subgroup to undertake a focussed piece of work to draw conclusions on the type of information it needs to assess the performance of the PCC. The subgroup will meet in October to examine the performance metrics the PCC intends to use in his new Police and Crime Plan and provide comment.
- 4.27 Forward Plan**
- 4.28 The Panel has scheduled meetings in December, January, February and March. Members will continue to shape its work programme to enable it to assess the impact, actions and decisions of the PCC.
- 4.29 All Panel members are encouraged to develop dialogue with their local scrutiny committees on policing, community safety and criminal justice to feed into the panel work programming process.

MEMBER ENGAGEMENT

Ward Councillor(s)

- 4.30 Not applicable

Overview and Scrutiny

- 4.31 Not applicable

Other

- 4.32 Not applicable

5 IMPACT AND IMPLICATIONS

Finance and Best Value

- 5.1 There are no financial implications as a result of the recommendation in this report. The Home Office provides an annual grant to support the administration of Police and Crime Panels. The West Midlands Police and Crime Panel grant is administered by Birmingham City Council as the host authority.

Legal

- 5.2 A Police and Crime Panel for the West Midlands must be maintained to carry out the scrutiny functions and responsibilities set out in the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011. The Panel membership must represent all the districts and reflect the political composition of the region.

Equalities

- 5.3 This Police and Crime Panel is a joint committee of West Midlands Local Authorities. Therefore, it has a Public Sector Equality Duty under the Equality Act (2010) to have due regard to the need to:
- Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation, and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act.
 - Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
 - Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
- 5.4 The Panel considers these duties during work programme development, the scoping of work, evidence gathering and making recommendations. Including how policy issues impact on different groups within the community, particularly those that share a relevant protected characteristic; whether impact on particular groups is fair and proportionate; whether there is equality of access to services and fair representation of all groups within the West Midlands; and whether any positive opportunities to advance equality of opportunity and/or good relations between people are being realised.

Procurement

- 5.5 There are no procurement implications arising from this report.

People Services

- 5.6 There are no staffing implications arising from the recommendations in this report.

Climate Change, Nature and Net Zero

- 5.7 There are no climate change, nature and net zero carbon implications arising from the recommendations in this report.

Corporate Parenting

- 5.8 There are no implications or opportunities in relation to the Corporate Parenting responsibility arising from the recommendations in this report.

Other

- 5.9 There are no other implications arising from the recommendations in this report.

6 APPENDICES

- 6.1 None

7 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 7.1 [WMPCP agenda and minutes November 2023 – October 2024](#)
7.2 [Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011](#)

Birmingham City Council

Report to City Council

5 November 2024



Title:	SCRUTINY BUSINESS REPORT
Lead Member:	Councillor Sir Albert Bore
Relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee:	Not Applicable
Has this report been shared with the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee Chair?	Not Applicable
Report Author:	Fiona Bottrill, Senior Overview and Scrutiny Manager Legal and Governance Fiona.bottrill@birmingham.gov.uk
Authorised by:	Marie Rosenthal, Interim City Solicitor and Monitoring Officer, Legal and Governance
Is this a Key Decision?	Not Applicable
Reason(s) why not included on the Forward Plan and confirm who has authorised it to be considered:	Not Applicable
Is this a Late Report?	No
Reason(s) why Late and confirm who has authorised it to be considered:	Not Applicable
Is this decision eligible for 'call in?'	Not Applicable
If 'call-in' has been dis-applied, please provide reason(s) and confirm who has authorised:	Not Applicable
Wards:	Not Applicable
Does this report contain exempt or confidential information?	No

Has this decision been included on the Notification of Intention to consider Matters in Private? Not Applicable

Reasons why not included on the Notification and confirm who has authorised it to be considered: Not Applicable

1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update City Council on the progress of Overview and Scrutiny in responding to the challenges the Council faces and the work of the 7 Overview and Scrutiny Committees, 2 Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committees.
- 1.2 Since City Council considered the Scrutiny Business Report in June 2024 the recommendations in the Governance Stabilisation Plan relating to Overview and Scrutiny have been implemented and key aspects of this work will continue through the Overview and Scrutiny Development Plan approved in September 2024 and Overview and Scrutiny Committees have undertaken the work set out in section 4.6 – 4.36 of the report below.

2 COMMISSIONERS' REVIEW

- 2.1 Commissioners support the proposals.

3 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 That City Council note the report.

4 KEY INFORMATION

Context

- 4.1 Overview and Scrutiny is a statutory function of the Council alongside the Executive and Regulatory arrangements. Over the last 18 months Overview and Scrutiny has adapted to become more flexible and responsive to issues as they emerge and focussing on the key priorities for the Council. This new way of working has become increasingly important since the Government intervention as a result of the Council's financial and service challenges. This report sets the key stages in the development of the Overview and Scrutiny function to ensure the Council has robust governance arrangements and delivers the Improvement Recovery Plan.
- 4.2 **Implementation of the Recommendations relating to Overview and Scrutiny in the Governance Stabilisation Plan:** The recommendations set out in the Governance Stabilisation Plan relating to Overview and Scrutiny have been implemented and continue to inform the further development of the function. This includes:
- The work programmes for all Overview and Scrutiny Committees identify how the items relate to the Improvement and Recovery Plan Priorities
 - The participation of the Chair of Corporate and Finance O&S Committee and the Independent Chair of Audit Committee in the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny in the Audit and Scrutiny Pilot Development Programme that will develop a publication to provide assistance to audit and scrutiny chairs.

- When Overview and Scrutiny Committees identify potential risks, these will be reported to the Council's risk management arrangements and a response provided to the Committee.
- Overview and Scrutiny Chairs attended a risk management workshop.
- Following the work of the Scrutiny Information Task and Finish Group an Information Hub is being developed to share risk, performance and delivery information with members of Overview and Scrutiny Committees to inform the Committee work programmes.
- Overview and Scrutiny Committees have received the information on the delivery and implications of 2024/25 savings and the Improvement and Recovery Plan Programmes relevant to their terms of reference.
- Corporate and Finance O&S Committee held a Task and Finish Group meeting to consider the budget pressures in 2024/25 and the implications for the 2025/26 Budget and Medium Term Financial Plan.
- The new report template used by all Committees will improve the quality of information available to members.

4.3 Overview and Scrutiny Development Plan: A draft Scrutiny Development Plan was considered at Corporate and Finance O&S Committee in July 2024 and following engagement with Cabinet Members, the Corporate Leadership Team and Commissioners the plan was approved by Corporate and Finance O&S Committee on 27 September [CMIS > Meetings](#) The plan sets out:

- The purpose of Overview and Scrutiny and roles and responsibilities
- Criteria to be considered when agreeing items in Overview and Scrutiny Committee work programmes
- Different ways Overview and Scrutiny Committees can deliver their work programmes
- Information and support for members undertaking Overview and Scrutiny
- How the work of Overview and Scrutiny Committees will be monitored and reported
- Objectives and activities that will be completed over the next 12 – 18 months

Demonstrating Outcomes: Homes O&S Committee Case Study

4.4 On 1 April 2023, the new Social Housing Regulation Act came into effect. New consumer standards from this Act for all social landlords, including Birmingham City Council, are designed to protect tenants and improve the service they receive. Under these new standards the Council will need to: ensure tenants are safe in their home; listen to tenants' complaints and respond promptly to put

things right; be accountable to tenants and treat them with fairness and respect; know more about the condition of every home and the needs of the people who live in them; and collect and use data effectively across a range of areas, including repairs. The Regulator for Social Housing (RSH) will hold landlords to account against these new standards.

4.5 With the introduction of these new consumer standards and further reinforced by the Improvement and Recovery Plan, it has provided the Homes Overview and Scrutiny Committee with the opportunity to focus on the Council's performance to:

- Check the Council is meeting the outcomes in standards
- Scrutinise data about tenant satisfaction, repairs and other relevant issues
- Be assured that the Council is protecting tenants and putting things right when there are problems

"For many councillors, complaints about our housing service often forms the biggest part of our case work. When talking to our residents at surgeries, on their doorsteps, or helping them with casework we see the Council Housing service from a unique perspective. Our ability to bring our residents lived experience to the scrutiny committee is incredibly valuable."

Councillor Jamie Tennant, Chair of Homes Overview and Scrutiny Committee

4.6 What steps have the Homes Overview and Scrutiny Committee taken to prepare to deliver on this?

"The Overview and Scrutiny Committee is a key part of our City Housing Assurance Framework. It is only if all of these parts work together can we push forward and deliver better services for our tenants. Which is why we have been very keen to welcome the challenge from Committee members and give them the tools to do it."

Paul Langford, Strategic Director, City Housing Directorate

4.7 The City Housing directorate have worked closely with the Scrutiny and Committee services team to deliver:

- Additional briefings on what the new consumer standards mean, as well as the areas for improvement highlighted by the Housing Ombudsman in its Special Report (January 2023) and the Regulatory Notice (May 2023).
- Introduction of new quarterly reports on regulatory compliance providing data on key issues such as repairs and complaints including lessons learnt and remedial actions.
- Specific 'deep dive' reports on issues such as Tenant Satisfaction.
- Visits to empty Council properties – this helps members to see in real terms what the issues are and how things are changing.

Impact so far

- Visibility and Transparency – performance information is now available to councillors and to the public in an accessible format on how the Council is performing around important issues such as Landlord Health and Safety, damp and mould and Decent Homes Standard. It describes the current position and the direction of travel, as well as outlines what the Council is doing about it. This is a significant step forward to help the committee to hold the Executive and senior officers to account.
- Positive challenge – the new performance information also equips the committee to drill down on key issues. In turn, this assists them to make informed recommendations which could deliver service improvements.
- Housing Repairs, Maintenance and Investment 2026 – the Committee undertook Pre Decision Scrutiny in September 2024. Information provided in previous quarterly compliance reports informed and underpinned the committee's discussions, and particularly considered how it can deliver improved tenant satisfaction. As an example, City Housing has agreed to share the Key Performance Indicators before they are agreed for the Committee. This means we can be assured they will meet the needs of tenants.

“The work done so far has laid down some important foundations for the Committee to build on as we go through the journey with the Regulator. I'd like to explore how we bring in other voices, such as tenants, neighbours, frontline staff and local Elected Members to add life to the reports and data we see. We need to keep refreshing our work programme to make sure we are looking at the right things. As a Committee alongside the directorate, there's many opportunities with this platform and processes to make a difference for our residents”

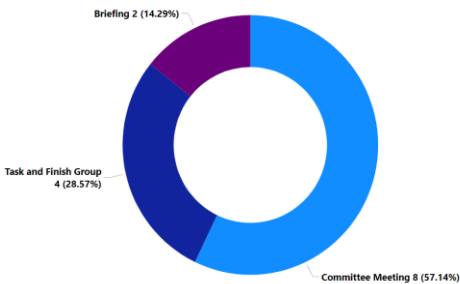
Councillor Jamie Tennant, Chair of Homes Overview and Scrutiny Committee

- 4.8 **Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programmes:** The Overview and Scrutiny Committees will have held 67 meetings between June – December 2024. The charts below show the number and types of meetings held by the different committees.

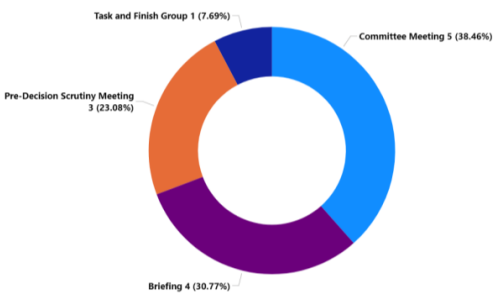
Charts: Showing Number and Type of Scrutiny Meetings by Overview and Scrutiny Committee

	Committee Meeting
	Task and Finish Group
	Pre-Decision Scrutiny
	Briefing
	Site Visit

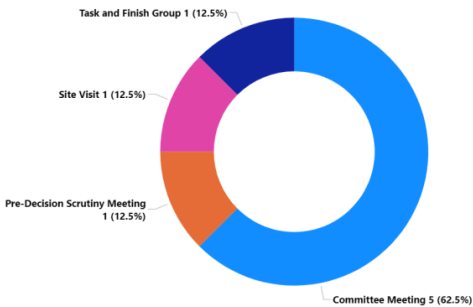
Corporate and Finance OSC



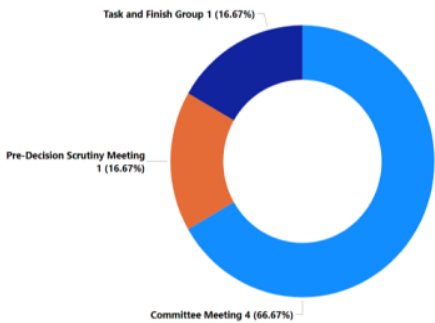
Economy, Skills and Culture OSC



Education, Children and Young People OSC



Health and Adult Social Care OSC



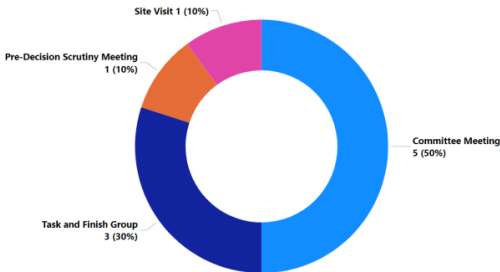
Birmingham and Sandwell Joint HOSC



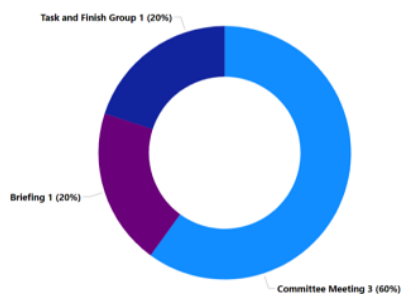
Birmingham and Solihull Joint HOSC



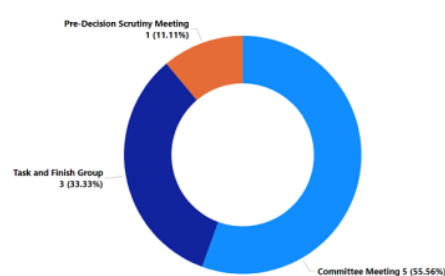
Homes OSC



Neighbourhoods OSC



Sustainability and Transport OSC



From: Scrutiny Dashboard developed with City Observatory (Information correct at 10 October 2024)

- 4.9 **Corporate & Finance O&S Committee:** The Information Task and Finish Group was established by Co-ordinating OSC in May 2024 and the work has continued under the Corporate and Finance OSC. Following the work to address issues identified in the Council's Governance Stabilisation Plan and subsequent work by the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny (CfGS) it was agreed that the Task and Finish Group would look at how to develop a sustainable approach to information sharing / management which gives members confidence that they can maintain a watching brief over emerging issues to inform the work of Overview and Scrutiny Committees. The report of the Task and Finish Group was agreed Corporate and Finance OSC on 27 September.
- 4.10 A Task and Finish Group meeting was held in July to consider the implications of the 2024/25 budget savings within the Committee's terms of reference. Recommendations from the Task and Finish Group meeting were agreed by the Corporate and Finance OSC on 27 September. Recommendations agreed will be considered by Cabinet in October.
- 4.11 The Committee has considered the Section 151 Officers reports to Cabinet in July and September. The July report included the progress in the delivery of savings and the early September report provided an opportunity for pre-decision scrutiny. The Committee agreed comments that were considered by Cabinet on 10 September.
- 4.12 A briefing for members of the Committee was held to update on the Job Evaluation and the Oracle Reimplementation programmes and consider how this will be included in the Committee's work programme. Members also received an update on the Shaping Birmingham Future Together consultation and how this informed the development of the revised Corporate Plan.
- 4.13 A Task and Finish Group meeting in September considered the 24/25 budget pressures in Adult Social Care, Children and Families and Housing (Temporary Accommodation) and implications for the 25/26 Budget and Medium-Term Financial Plan.

- 4.14 At the Committee meeting on 27 September reports on the further progress on the delivery of 24/25 savings and on the Improvement and Recovery Plan (IRP) Programmes within the Committee's terms of reference were considered.
- 4.15 At future meetings the Committee will consider:
- Work of the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA): The Committee will receive reports from the WMCA at the November across the region and at the March Committee meeting which will focus on work of the WMCA in Birmingham.
 - Finance Scrutiny: The Committee will continue to scrutinise the Council's financial position and consider the Medium-Term Financial Plan Refresh and Quarter 2 of the Financial Year, the Provisional Financial Outturn (2023/24) at the November Committee meeting. The Committee will also consider the 2025/26 Budget Proposals in January 2025.
 - Delivery of Savings: A further report on the delivery of the 24/25 savings within the Committee's terms of reference will be considered in December.
 - Delivery of IRP Programmes: A further report on the delivery of the IRP Programmes will also be considered in December.
 - Development of the 25/26 Budget and MTFP
- 4.16 **Economy, Skills & Culture O&S Committee:** Scrutiny of the Asset Disposal Programme has continued to be a major focus. The Committee undertook Pre-Decision scrutiny on the sales of Peddimore, Perry Barr residential and the council offices on Woodcock Street before they were considered by Cabinet Committee - Property. Further to this, the Committee has also received quarterly reports in July and October on the overall progress of the Asset Disposal programme. In August, the Committee received a briefing on the Corporate Asset Rationalisation programme. The Committee has also received an initial briefing followed by a workshop to inform the development of the Place Based Plan. The Committee has considered the impact of the 24/25 savings at a Task and Finish Group meeting in July and the recommendations from this work were agreed by Corporate and Finance O&S Committee in September and will be considered by Cabinet. The Committee meeting in October considered the delivery of 24/25 savings, an update on the Asset Sale IRP Programme and the received a report on the implementation of the recommendations of the Scrutiny Inquiry on employment and skills for young people.
- 4.17 At future meetings the Committee will:
- Undertake work on how the Council can attract a younger workforce.
 - Continue scrutiny of the delivery of savings and the IRP Programme / Asset Disposal.
 - Assess the current health of arts, heritage and cultural assets.

- 4.18 **Education, Children and Young People O&S Committee:** In June, Members visited the City of Birmingham School (COBS) and gained a greater understanding of their work to meet the needs of young people, and the outcomes are being used to inform the work of the Committee. At the July meeting, Members undertook pre-decision scrutiny and considered the draft Birmingham School Attendance Strategy 2024-2028 prior to discussion at Cabinet. In addition, at the July Task and Finish Group meeting, and in line with all O&S Committees, members considered the impact of the 2024/25 savings.
- 4.19 In October, members considered the update on the Birmingham Youth Justice Plan 2023-2028, Children and Young Peoples' Travel Service (CYPTS) and also the delivery of savings and delivery of the IRP Programme within the Committee's terms of reference.
- 4.20 The SEND Commissioner's report published in August 2024 commented on a notable shift of tone and focus of the role of the Committee in supporting officers and improvement.
- 4.21 At future meetings the Committee will consider:
- The SEND Commissioner will be providing an update on SEND Improvement, and Members will be discussing and making recommendations on the Improving Services for Children and Families Plan and discussing the progress report on the Implementation of the Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE) Inquiry Recommendations.
 - Members will be discussing and making recommendations in relation to children's safeguarding in the city and the Birmingham Safeguarding Children's Partnership will be presenting their 2022/23 and 2023/24 annual reports.
 - In addition, Members will continue to consider and make recommendations on the delivery of the 2024/25 savings within the Committee's terms of reference and the Improving Services for Children & Families Programme.
- 4.22 **Homes O&S Committee:** The Committee has considered the Council's progress towards achieving regulatory compliance through City Housing's quarterly report to the July and October Committee meetings. With the introduction of national performance measures around tenant satisfaction, the Committee considered on Tenant Satisfaction and how information from tenants is now been used to inform and improve service delivery. As part of this, the Committee was pleased to welcome a tenant to this discussion to provide their perspective. The Committee has completed pre-decision scrutiny on the proposed Repairs and Maintenance contract decision. The Committee has also considered information on the current progress of the Druids Heath regeneration scheme. The Committee has considered the delivery and impact of the 24/25 savings within its Terms of

Reference and an update on delivery of the Housing Improvement IRP Programme.

4.23 The Committee considered the progress in the outstanding recommendations from the Scrutiny Inquiry on Exempt Accommodation at the meeting in October.

4.24 At future meetings the Committee will consider:

- Disrepair and Stock condition and rent revenues at the meeting in December.
- In January the Committee will receive reports on Regulatory Compliance
- Delivery of 24/25 savings
- Delivery of Housing Improvement IRP Programme.

4.25 **Health and Adult Social Care O&S Committee (HASC):** The HASC O&S Committee held a Task and Finish Scrutiny meeting in July on the implications of the 2024/25 savings within the Committee's terms of reference as agreed in the Council's budget. The Committee also engaged with external organisations Healthwatch Birmingham and Forward Carers to inform this work. Recommendations from the July Task and Finish Group meeting were agreed by the Corporate and Finance OSC on 27 September and will be considered by Cabinet.

4.26 During 2023/24, one of the key issues for the Health and Adult Social Care OSC Committee has been its scrutiny of the Birmingham & Solihull NHS Trust decision regarding the temporary relocation of Warren Farm Urgent Care Treatment Centre to another location due to health and safety concerns. Scrutiny ensured that statutory process of engagement was adhered to by the Trust as part of the decision-making and informed the outcome of the temporary relocation to Erdington High Street.

4.27 Following work undertaken by the Committee during 2023/24 on the Adult Social Care Day Opportunities service, the Committee held a pre-decision meeting on the Days Opportunities review, 'Your Day, Your Say' in July. The recommendations agreed by the Committee, focusing on the impact of proposed changes on citizens and carers, were reported to Cabinet in October which included a response to the Committee's recommendations.

4.28 At the September Committee meeting, members approved the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the council and the Integrated Care Board and NHS Trust for Birmingham & Solihull. This clarifies the role of Health Scrutiny, specifically in regard to consultations on substantial variations and developments of health services following the changes to the Health Scrutiny Guidance, in line with the Health and Social Care Act 2022. The MoU was also shared with both Joint Health & Social Care Scrutiny committees with Solihull and Sandwell. The MoU has also been shared as best practice with other networks in the West

Midlands region. The meeting also considered the reports from the Cabinet Member for Children and Families and the NHS on the implementation of recommendations of the scrutiny inquiry into children and young people mental health services.

- 4.29 The October Committee meeting considered the delivery of 2024/25 savings within the Committee's term of reference and also the Birmingham and Solihull ICB Quality Report.
- 4.30 **Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committees:** The Birmingham and Sandwell Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (JHOSC) met on 16 September 2024 at Sandwell MBC. The Committee considered the opening of the new Midland Metropolitan University Hospital (MMUH) in Sandwell. The committee have scrutinised this major hospital project, including visits to the new site last municipal year. The Committee was informed that Sandwell patients will move to the new hospital on 6 October, Maternity and Neonates will move on 6 November 2024 and City Hospital patients will move on 10 November 2024.
- 4.31 The Birmingham and Solihull Joint Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee met on 5 October 2024 at Solihull MBC and considered reports on the emergency temporary re-location of Warren Farm urgent Treatment Centre, an update on maternity services at University Hospitals Birmingham NHS Foundation Trust and the Birmingham and Solihull Integrated Care Board Delivery Plan and the Headline Finance Report Month 4.
- 4.32 Future Committee meetings will consider:
- Delivery of 24/25 savings
 - Implications of national and local policy in relation to health and social care to ensure that joint working arrangements between the Council and NHS will improve outcomes for patients and citizens
 - Report on the opening of the Midland Metropolitan Hospital
 - NHS response to managing winter pressures
 - Update on the Independent Reviews into University Hospitals Birmingham NHS Foundation Trust.
- 4.33 **Neighbourhoods O&S Committee:** In line with all OSCs, Members considered the impact of the delivery of the 2024/25 savings and the delivery of the Improvement and Recovery Plan (IRP) within the committee's terms of reference at the July T&F meeting. At the October Committee meeting members considered the delivery of savings and the IRP Programmes within the Committee's terms of reference and also a report on the proposed improvement of Street Management.
- 4.34 At future meetings the Committee will consider:

- The delivery of the 2024/25 savings and the IRP Programmes within the Committee's terms of reference.
- The Transformation of Neighbourhood Advice and Information Services and Community Libraries
- An update on the review of parks.
- Implementation of Waste Improvement Programme and Street Scene Transformation.
- The Committee is also developing a themed meeting later in the year to fulfil its responsibilities as the Crime and Disorder Committee, incorporating the Birmingham Community Safety Partnership annual report, neighbourhood policing and place-based approach to addressing anti-social behaviour.

4.35 **Sustainability and Transport O&S Committee:** The Committee has continued work on the Road Safety inquiry which will be reported to City Council in December 2024. The Committee has also received information on the current position for Highways Maintenance and Management, Illegal Footway Crossings (Dropped Kerbs) and undertaken pre-decision scrutiny of the proposed Road Harm Reduction Strategy.

4.36 At future meetings the Committee will consider:

- Route to Zero carbon
- Highways network and permit scheme
- Delivery of 2024/25 Savings and IRP Programmes
- Impact of Clean Air Zone
- Flood Risk Management
- Monitoring the recommendations of the Scrutiny Inquiry on Active Travel

4.37 **West Midlands Police and Crime Panel:** The Lead Member report to City Council will provide an update on the work of the Panel.

5 MEMBER ENGAGEMENT

Ward Councillor(s)

5.1 Not Applicable

Overview and Scrutiny

5.2 Not applicable

Other

- 5.3 Not Applicable

6 IMPACT AND IMPLICATIONS

Finance and Best Value

- 6.1 There are no financial implications resulting from the recommendations in this report. Overview and Scrutiny Committees will continue to scrutinise the delivery of savings as a key element of the Council's financial recovery.

Legal

- 6.2 There are no legal implications resulting from the recommendations in this report. The work of the O&S Committees meets the Council's statutory duties regarding local government and health scrutiny as set out in the Statutory Guidance: [Overview and scrutiny: statutory guidance for councils, combined authorities and combined county authorities - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/344241/Overview_and_scrutiny_statutory_guidance_for_councils_combined_authorities_and_combined_county_authorities.pdf) and Health Scrutiny Regulations: [Local authority health scrutiny - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/344241/Local_authority_health_scrutiny.pdf)

Equalities

- 6.3 The Council has a Public Sector Equality Duty under the Equality Act (2010) to have due regard to the need to:
- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act;
 - advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
 - foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
- 6.4 The protected characteristics and groups outlined in the Equality Act are: Age; Disability; Gender Reassignment; Marriage and Civil Partnership; Pregnancy and Maternity; Race; Religion and Belief; Sex, and Sexual Orientation.
- 6.5 Overview and Scrutiny should ensure that it addresses these duties by considering them during work programme development, the scoping of work, evidence gathering and making recommendations. This should include considering: How policy issues impact on different groups within the community, particularly those that share a relevant protected characteristic; Whether the impact on particular groups is fair and proportionate; Whether there is equality of access to services and fair representation of all groups within Birmingham; Whether any positive opportunities to advance equality of opportunity and/or good relations between people are being realised.
- 6.6 Overview and Scrutiny should ensure that equalities comments, and any recommendations, are based on evidence. This should include demographic and

service level data and evidence of residents/service-users views gathered through consultation.

Procurement

- 6.7 There are not procurement implications arising from this report.

People Services

- 6.8 There are no staffing implications arising from the recommendations in this report.

Climate Change, Nature and Net Zero

- 6.9 Overview and Scrutiny Committees will consider climate change, nature and Net Zero issues relevant to the work programme items.

Corporate Parenting

- 6.10 Overview and Scrutiny Committees will consider corporate parenting responsibilities and opportunities relevant to the work programme.

Other

- 6.11 There are no other implications arising from the recommendations in this report.

7 APPENDICES

- 7.1 None

8 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 8.1 None

Birmingham City Council

Report to Full Council

5 November 2024



Title:	DECISIONS NOT ON THE FORWARD PLAN AND THOSE AUTHORISED FOR IMMEDIATE IMPLEMENTATION
Lead Member:	Councillor John Cotton, Leader
Relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee:	Not Applicable
Has this report been shared with the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee Chair?	Not Applicable
Report Author:	Christian Scade Head of Scrutiny and Committee Services, Legal and Governance 07517 550013 Christian.Scade@birmingham.gov.uk
Authorised by:	Marie Rosenthal Interim City Solicitor and Monitoring Officer
Is this a Key Decision?	Not Applicable
Reason(s) why not included on the Forward Plan and confirm who has authorised it to be considered:	Not Applicable
Is this a Late Report?	No
Reason(s) why Late and confirm who has authorised it to be considered:	Not Applicable
Is this decision eligible for 'call in?'	Not Applicable
If 'call-in' has been dis-applied, please provide reason(s) and confirm who has authorised:	Not Applicable
Wards:	All
Does this report contain exempt or confidential information?	No

1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report, which is required under Part B6 of the Constitution, sets out any key decisions not included on the Forward Plan and any decisions which were authorised for immediate implementation.
- 1.2 Following amendments to the Constitution in 2022 this is the seventh report to be submitted, covering the period 16 May 2024 to 30 September 2024.

2 COMMISSIONERS' REVIEW

- 2.1 No comments from Commissioners, proposals approved.

3 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 That Full Council notes the report.

4 KEY INFORMATION

Context

- 4.1 Key decisions should be included on the Forward Plan not less than 28 clear calendar days in advance of the proposed decision. If a matter, which is likely to be a key decision has not been included on the Forward Plan, but it is impracticable to defer the decision, the decision may still be taken provided it meets the requirements set out in the Constitution (Part B6).
- 4.2 Where there is an intention for Cabinet to consider matters in private, i.e. information that is confidential or exempt, 28 days' notice must also be given. This is done through inclusion on the "Notification of intention for Cabinet to consider matters in private" form. Any report containing confidential or exempt information that is not included requires agreement from the Chair of the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee that the report is urgent and cannot reasonably be deferred.
- 4.3 There is also a requirement for the Leader of the Council to provide details on any reports authorised for immediate implementation: i.e. where the interests of the Council are jeopardised unless an executive decision is implemented immediately and when its implementation cannot wait until the expiry of the call-in period.
- 4.4 In an emergency, as set out under Part B6 of the Constitution, an executive decision may be agreed by the Chief Executive, following consultation with the Group Leaders, as long as the requirements set out in Part E4 are met.
- 4.5 There were no emergency or urgent decisions taken by the Chief Executive for the period in question.

Key Decisions Not on the Forward Plan

- 4.6 For the period in question, all key decisions were included in the Forward Plan, not less than 28 clear calendar days in advance of the proposed decision.

Decisions Authorised for Immediate Implementation

- 4.7 For the period in question, there were no decisions authorised for immediate implementation.
- 4.8 However, for completeness, in addition to decisions authorised for immediate implementation, Council Business Management Committee has asked for updates to be provided on any requests for call-in, which were not accepted.
- 4.9 Call-in is intended to be used in exceptional circumstances for decisions believed to be contrary to the authority's decision making principles. It provides an opportunity to reconsider decisions, before they are implemented. Further information on call-in is set out in Part B11.9 of the Constitution.
- 4.10 For the period 16 May to 30 September, there were no requests for call-in, not approved for consideration by an Overview and Scrutiny Committee. However, Council Business Management has asked that the following information be included, at this stage, for the record.
- 4.11 The Interim City Solicitor and Monitoring Officer, was directed by Commissioners, on 2 May to reject a call-in request concerning Travel Assistance Policy. This was rejected, on 2 May 2024, for two reasons:
- It would have breached the terms of the Exceptional Financial Support agreed by the Council to balance its 2024/25 Budget. This required the Council to progress the delivery of the proposed savings identified in the 2024-25 budget without delay.
 - There had been pre-decision scrutiny of the budget proposals, including this one.
- 4.12 A request to call-in the City Centre Public Space Protection Orders decision was rejected by the Interim City Solicitor, in consultation with the Chair of Corporate and Finance OSC, on 14 October 2024 for the following reasons:
- The Decision was within existing Policy and was well founded.
 - The Call-In was premature as the decision was only to consult. The proposal was not to implement a PSPO but to consult on the possibility of introducing PSPOs. Paragraph 4.20 of the report on cycling in pedestrian areas made this clear and it states that "Further consideration is needed with respect to this measure which will be captured in the consultation." The consultation will consider the Active Travel scheme.
 - The Decision has been properly taken as any delay in the consultation would put the renewal of the PSPO at risk as it expires in January 2025.

Late Reports

- 4.13 For the period 16 May 2024 to 30 September 2024, there was 1 Cabinet report listed on the agenda but due to special circumstances was not available until after the agenda had been published.
- 4.14 This was the Section 151 Officer Update on the Financial Position of the Council – July 2024 and General Fund Medium Term Financial Plan Update.
- 4.15 The reasons for lateness were to allow the Medium-Term Financial Plan to reflect the latest financial position of the Council. This allowed additional information. within the risk section of this report, to be included.

5 RISK MANAGEMENT

- 5.1 There are no direct risk management implications arising from this report.

6 IMPACT AND IMPLICATIONS

Finance and Best Value

- 6.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

Legal

- 6.2 This report, for consideration by Full Council, is required under The Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012.

Equalities

- 6.3 There are no direct equalities implications arising from this report.

7 APPENDICES

- 7.1 None.

8 BACKGROUND PAPERS

None.

Birmingham City Council

Report to City Council

5 November 2024



Title:	MOTIONS FOR DEBATE FROM INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS
Report Author:	Ben Patel-Sadler, Senior Committee Manager Legal and Governance (Council Management) Ben.Patel-Sadler@birmingham.gov.uk
Authorised by:	Marie Rosenthal, Interim City Solicitor and Monitoring Officer Legal and Governance (Council Management)
Is this a Key Decision?	Not Applicable
If this is a Key Decision, is this decision listed on the Forward Plan?	Not Applicable
Reason(s) why not included on the Forward Plan:	Not Applicable
Is this a Late Report?	No
Reason(s) why Late:	Not Applicable
Is this decision eligible for 'call in?'	Not Applicable
If not eligible, please provide reason(s):	Not Applicable
Wards:	Not Applicable

Does this report contain exempt or confidential information? No

Has this decision been included on the Notification of Intention to consider Matters in Private? Not Applicable

Reasons why not included on the Notification: Not Applicable

1 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1.1 To consider the following Motions of which notice has been given in accordance with Council Procedure Rules (section B4.4 G of the Constitution).

2 NOTICES OF MOTION

A. Councillors Jayne Francis and Jamie Tennant have given notice of the following Notice of Motion:-

“This Council notes that:

- The United Kingdom is navigating a national housing crisis, resulting in an over reliance on temporary accommodation to safeguard households facing homelessness across the UK.
- Temporary accommodation was never intended to exist for more than an immediate solution; Shelter reports, as of April 2024, 145,800 children are homeless and living in temporary accommodation with their families; the highest on record and up 19,460 (15%) in a year.
- Birmingham experiences a similar picture, with over 5000 households now living in temporary accommodation, 700 of these are families with dependent children in B&B for over 6 weeks. Temporary accommodation costs the Council over £2m per month, contributing to the £1.6bn national expenditure.
- Councils, including Birmingham are penalised for utilising privately provided temporary accommodation, being only able to receive 90% of the 2011 Local Housing Allowance rates as income, resulting in the need for large, general fund subsidies to enable the provision.
- Our commitment to prevention and partnership is reflected in the new Homelessness Prevention Strategy 2024-2029. A prevention success rate of over 55% is greater than the national or core cities average.
- In absolute terms, the Council’s position in relation to the use of temporary accommodation is not out of kilter with the rest of the UK. However, the city’s overreliance of B&B accommodation and a reduction in the number of affordable homes delivered has increased the number and length of time families reside in unsuitable B&B accommodation.
- The Council launched its Temporary Accommodation Strategy in June 2023, reviewed in September 2024 considering the Council’s challenging financial position. The strategy sets out an innovative plan to reduce the use of B&B accommodation, including interventions such as:
 - 10 years plus 1 day leasing scheme
 - Delivering acquisitions through the Housing Revenue Account
 - Increased use of Regulation 10

- Developing a family supported exempt model
- This strategy is coupled with the Council's intentions to increase the supply of social rented homes. The Council continue to work with partners to bring forward affordable schemes, including accelerating major regeneration projects such as Druids Heath and Ladywood.
- The Council are committed to doing everything within its power to reduce the number of families who are having to rely on long stays in temporary accommodation. However, there are several systemic challenges that are outside of the Council's control and require additional support from Government to move forward.

This Council believes that:

- The number of families building their lives in temporary accommodation across the UK and in Birmingham is unacceptable and causes major disruption to family life.
- The reduced number of affordable homes being delivered over recent years and the focus on home ownership as opposed to social rented products has significantly reduced the ability of households to move out of temporary accommodation quickly.
- The Council cannot resolve these challenges alone and require long-term and sustained investment in a variety of interventions that will mitigate the impact of homelessness.
- The rising cost of temporary accommodation puts the stability of local government finance at risk and takes vital resource away from delivering a high-quality service.
- The cross-government taskforce to reduce homelessness, announced by the Deputy Prime Minister in August, is to be welcomed, appreciating the need for a clear and strategic approach to tackling homelessness.
- By working with the Mayor of the West Midlands and the Government, we can deliver the biggest programme of social and affordable housing in 40 years, if this is backed by long-term investment.

This Council resolves to:

- Write to and continue to lobby the Deputy Prime Minister to request that the homelessness taskforce brings forward a Homelessness Strategy that:
 - Sets out the priorities for investment.
 - Commits to fair funding and investment in alternatives to temporary accommodation and particularly B&B accommodation.
 - Commits to investment in the supply of social rented homes

- Commits to increasing the level of grant funding to help local authorities and their partners to acquire properties from the open market while the supply of new social homes catches up.”

B. Councillors Deirdre Alden and Alex Yip have given notice of the following Notice of Motion:-

“Council Notes:

- The Labour Government’s recent decision to restrict the Winter Fuel Payment to only pensioners in receipt of means-tested benefits like Pension Credit, as announced by Chancellor Rachel Reeves.
- The estimated impact of this decision, which Age UK says will mean 2 million pensioners who badly need the money to stay warm this winter will not receive it.
- The significant role that Winter Fuel Payments play in helping older residents of Birmingham and across the UK afford heating during the coldest months, thereby preventing 'heat or eat' dilemmas and safeguarding health.
- The criticism from Age UK and other charities, highlighting the social injustice and potential health risks posed by this sudden policy change.
- The additional strain this decision will place on vulnerable pensioners, many of whom do not claim Pension Credit despite being eligible, further exacerbating their financial hardship.
- Research by Policy in Practice predicts that over 17,000 pensioners in Birmingham are eligible for pension but do not yet claim. To receive the winter fuel allowance this year under the government’s revised policy, they will need to claim pension credit before 21 December 2024.
- Even if all of these were successfully added to the list of current claimants, that would still leave around 100,000 pensioners in Birmingham facing a cut to their household income this winter.
- The cut is coming at a time when energy bills are expected to rise by 10%, despite when in Opposition, the Labour Government promising to freeze the cap.

Council believes:

- That the Winter Fuel Payment has been a lifeline for many older people across the UK and that restricting its availability solely to those on Pension Credit risks leaving many pensioners in financial hardship.
- While some pensioners currently in receipt of the Winter Fuel Payment may not require it, many thousands across Birmingham sit just above the cut-off for Pension Credit, have higher energy bills due to disability or live in hard-to-heat homes and will now lose their allowance.
- The decision to means-test Winter Fuel Payments, especially with such short notice and without adequate compensatory measures, is deeply unfair and will disproportionately affect the health and well-being of our poorest older residents.
- The government's approach fails to consider the administrative barriers and stigma that prevent eligible pensioners from claiming Pension Credit, leaving many without the support they desperately need.
- The government's approach also fails to consider additional costs to the public purse through increased health and social care demand resulting from people struggling to heat their homes.

Council resolves to:

- Request that the Council Leader, jointly with other Group Leaders, write to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, urging a review of the decision to means-test the Winter Fuel Payment and asking the government to ensure that vulnerable pensioners, particularly those who do not claim Pension Credit, are protected from fuel poverty.
- Encourage local efforts to promote Pension Credit uptake through council services and partnerships with local charities and community organisations to ensure that all eligible pensioners in Birmingham are supported in claiming their entitlement.
- Commit the Council to signing the 'Save the Winter Fuel Payment for Struggling Pensioners' petition being run by Age UK and write to all members offering them the opportunity to sign the petition themselves."

3 IMPACT AND IMPLICATIONS

Finance

3.1 There are none arising from this report.

Legal

3.2 There are none arising from this report.

Equalities

3.3 There are none arising from this report.

APPENDICES

None.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

None.

